



# CHRISTIANITY TODAY

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The Debate Over Divine Election  
**FEATURE INTERVIEW**

Is Capital Punishment Wrong?  
**JACOB J. VELLENGA**

The Pre-eminent Christ  
**MASSEY MOTT HELTZEL**

Christendom's Key Issue  
**THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM**

**SPECIAL REPORT**

Did Khrushchev See America?

**DAVID E. KUCHARSKY**

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## CONTENTS

- FEATURE INTERVIEW: THE DEBATE OVER DIVINE ELECTION . . . 3  
Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Roger Nicole, H. Orton Wiley

- IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT WRONG? . . . 7  
Jacob V. Vellenga

- THE PRE-EMINENT CHRIST . . . 10  
Massey Mott Heltzel

- BIBLE TEXT OF THE MONTH: MATTHEW 5:10-12 . . . 13

- A LAYMAN AND HIS FAITH . . . 19

- EDITORIALS . . . 20  
The Mission of a Magazine

- EUTYCHUS AND HIS KIN . . . 27

- NEWS . . . 29  
Christendom's Key Issue: 25 Scholars' Views  
Special Report: Did Khrushchev See America?

- BOOKS IN REVIEW . . . 38

- REVIEW OF CURRENT RELIGIOUS THOUGHT . . . 44

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## FEATURE INTERVIEW:

# The Debate Over Divine Election

"Had not Christ by his own omnipotence healed some lepers, none would have been healed; had he not opened some sightless eyes, all the blind would have continued in darkness." So wrote Charles Hodge, noted Presbyterian theologian, to stress the fact that, in the present state of mankind, had not God chosen to rescue some from the error of their way, none would be saved. And all Protestants agree. But theologians today debate the nature of divine election no less vigorously than in earlier Christian ages. Does divine election imply God's sovereign or his conditional choice of individuals?

In this issue CHRISTIANITY TODAY invites its readers to a theological conversation, arranged at a single day's notice, on the subject of divine election at the Pasadena residence of Editor Carl F. H. Henry. Taking part in this illuminating and instructive dialogue are prominent evangelical scholars: Dr. Roger Nicole, Professor of Theology at Gordon Divinity School in New England; Dr. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, Professor of Church History at Fuller Theological Seminary, and Dr. H. Orton Wiley, President Emeritus of Pasadena College in California.

Dr. Bromiley, an Anglican clergyman, has lectured in the graduate school of New College, Edinburgh, is translator of Karl Barth's *Church Dogmatics*, and author of several books in his chosen field of church history.

Dr. Nicole, a Baptist minister, is a birth citizen of Calvin's Geneva, and the grandson of the late Jules Nicole, professor of Greek in the University of Geneva. His doctoral dissertation at Harvard Divinity School is being submitted on the topic "Aspects of the Doctrine of Election."

Dr. Wiley, a Nazarene minister, is author of the three-volume work *Christian Theology and of commentaries on many Bible books*. He holds the S.T.D. degree from Pacific School of Religion and teaches in the graduate school of Pasadena College.

DR. HENRY: Have we always held our present views of election through the years, or does your view represent a modification or reversal? If there has been a modification, what influences helped to bring it about?

DR. NICOLE: I have probably always inclined to the Calvinistic position, which recognizes the sovereign choice of God in election, rather than the agency of man. But the matter exercised me a great deal some 25 years ago. I was led to carry on quite a study both of Scripture and theological works. This study confirmed my early position.

DR. WILEY: I've always held my position. I was brought up in the United Brethren Church. It is a German church, practically the same as the Methodist—an Arminian church in its tradition. Then for awhile I was in the Methodist church.

DR. BROMILEY: My Christian upbringing was in the classical line of Anglican evangelicalism—not that which was strongly influenced by Methodism or pietistic movements, but the older type, which, of course, held the classical Anglican position. I personally would regard that as the Reformed view in its earlier stages—before the Dort influences or the Arminian controversy. I think I still adhere to that, but have, of course, been giving it considerable reflection, more especially in relation to the Dort influences in English Puritanism, in the light of the critique in Karl Barth's treatment of election, in the second part of Volume II of *Church Dogmatics*.

DR. HENRY: As an Anglican, you are committed to the authority of Scripture, and to assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles. What is the position of the Articles on election?

DR. BROMILEY: Theirs is a guarded statement in this sense: they have a positive doctrine of election but they do not include any doctrine of reprobation.

DR. HENRY: Individual election?

DR. BROMILEY: It doesn't say that. The statement as a whole is cautiously worded and doesn't go into details.

DR. HENRY: In the Bible aren't the terms predestination and election given a far wider use than the more narrow connotation so often found in theological discussion today? Isn't the conception of predestination and election broader than this question of God's sovereign choice of individuals on which Arminian-Calvinistic controversy turns, and incorporating much of what we speak of today as God's providence?

DR. WILEY: Well, I look upon predestination as growing out of Scripture, and that it originated from the destiny in Canaan reserved by God for his people. I hold, of course, to class predestination; the elect are those that are in Christ.

DR. HENRY: Based on God's foreknowledge?

DR. WILEY: Yes, I would take that position.

DR. NICOLE: The biblical language is somewhat varied. The term predestinate itself is not found often in Scripture—about four times, if I'm not mistaken—and there are other terms: counsel, and determination, and then, foreknowledge; while the term providence, commonly used in theology, if I remember rightly, is not found in Scripture at all. So the whole matter of God's relationship to his creation, which is subsumed under providence, may also be subsumed under the general doctrine of the decrees. And the decrees are, in part at least, made manifest in connection with salvation in the doctrine of predestination. So that I would say predestination is part of the decrees, and the decrees, if you want, are a broader term that includes also providence—although the term providence is commonly used with respect to the precise relation that the Creator sustains to his world after he has created it.

DR. BROMILEY: One or two additional things need also to be said. First of all, certain people have taken this view, of course, historically. Thomas Aquinas dealt with predestination or election under the heading of providence. And, in the period of the Reformation, Zwingli did also. He regarded predestination as one species, as it were, in the common genus of providence. My own feeling is against that, however. I think Barth's criticism is extremely good. He thinks the relationship ought to be reversed, which would really come in his language very much to what you were saying, and what Dr. Nicole was saying. Providence is God's overruling of his creation, but with a view to election, rather than the other way around (that election is a single part of the general providence). Therefore, election itself is the broader term, rather than providence. I tend to go with that, personally.

DR. HENRY: As we examine the debate over predestination and election in the narrower sense, on what points do all evangelical disputants agree, whether Arminian or Calvinist?

DR. NICOLE: Well, I would say that all agree that God is in fact sovereign. I am quite sure that the Arminian does not wish to deny that. He is often accused of doing it by the Calvinist, but I'm sure that he doesn't want to do so.

DR. BROMILEY: I think all would relate the decrees or election or predestination of God to the saving work of Christ, although in different ways. But I think all would in fact agree that the election of God is fulfilled in or through Christ.

DR. WILEY: I would add also that we all believe in salvation by grace from beginning to ending, from the first dawn of salvation to final glorification.

DR. NICOLE: I want to add another item on which all agree—that man in this involvement is acting as a responsible agent and not as a robot. The Calvinist wishes to assert that, even though at times he gives the Arminian the impression that he doesn't.

DR. WILEY: I think there is another likelihood of misunderstanding. We both believe in faith as the means of the acceptance of the gift of God—not faith as a substitute for righteousness, but faith as the exercise from the point of human helplessness, that gives all merit to Christ.

DR. HENRY: That faith is the appropriating means of salvation? The work of Christ is the ground of our salvation?

DR. WILEY: But no merit in faith! So many speak of Arminians as if we substitute faith for righteousness. We don't believe that.

DR. HENRY: All agree also that not all men are saved, and that not all men will be saved—a significant point. Does this exhaust the areas of agreement?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, I think all would agree about the work of the Holy Spirit and the calling of believers, even though they may envisage the calling slightly differently. The universal offer of salvation is another point.

DR. NICOLE: And the general benevolence of God.

DR. BROMILEY: I'm not so sure all the Reformed really do.

DR. WILEY: We believe there is a continuity in grace.

DR. NICOLE: That is, if grace has once been given to someone, it will keep on being given?

DR. WILEY: No. We hold there is no distinction in the nature of grace between prevenient grace and saving grace; that it's all of one nature. Consequently, we don't draw the distinction, frequently drawn in Calvinism, between common and saving grace. We think one merges into the other.

DR. NICOLE: Well, at that point the Calvinist is not in agreement. That is a place where we disagree.

DR. BROMILEY: Karl Barth would cut right across all these distinctions of subdivisions of grace, which he thinks really were carried forward into the Protestant discussions out of Romanism. He would relate the grace of God more strictly to Christ himself, in his own person. In that sense he would be forced, of course, to hold to continuity, not in the sense in which it was mentioned, but to a unity of grace.

DR. WILEY: Can we all agree that Christ is really the elect?

DR. BROMILEY: That is a Barthian note. I don't know that the Arminians actually have this.

DR. WILEY: Arminians stress and Ephesians teaches that we are predestinated as the children of God by Jesus Christ. I look at Christ as really *the seed*. He is in a sense *the seed* to which all others are gathered.

DR. HENRY: This would be held by all, that election is *in Christ*?

DR. NICOLE: Some supralapsarians [SUPRALAPSARIAN: one who holds that God's decree of election determined that all men should fall, as instrumental to the redemption of certain individuals.—ED.] don't share that view. Some say that election is prior even to any thought of redemption, and therefore that it would not be in Christ. So the passage in Ephesians about election in Christ would have to be explained by them with respect to some other decree.

DR. HENRY: Barth is a supralapsarian, is he not? And yet he says that election is in Christ.

DR. BROMILEY: Well, he takes the very simple view that

Christ is in the beginning of all the ways and works of God, and therefore you cannot possibly have anything that is prior to Christ. He also bases this on the Scriptures, on a twofold point—that Christ is in fact the elect according to the express statements of Isaiah, and also that Christ himself being the substitute is necessarily the elect. Otherwise, there is no genuine substitution.

DR. HENRY: By pushing Christ in this way into all the works and activities of God, does Barth place Satan, death and hell in Christ also?

DR. BROMILEY: No, because they are not the ways and works of God.

DR. HENRY: On the supralapsarian view?

DR. BROMILEY: Not in the sense that God positively wills them. They are willed by God only in a negative way, not in a positive way. Otherwise God is the author of sin—if sin is willed in the same sense that the good creature of God is willed.

DR. WILEY: But Christ is made a reprobate.

DR. BROMILEY: Ah, yes, but that was for us, taking the place of the sinner, you see. It's not directly that he is willed as *himself* a sinner, but he is willed as a *substitute* of the sinner, who takes to himself the reprobation of the sinner. And the reprobation is the judgment positively willed by God in exercising his righteousness.

DR. HENRY: Looking beyond the earlier areas of agreement, what formulation seems objectionable to each of us? Dr. Wiley, what about the Calvinistic formulation?

DR. WILEY: Well, I object to both the 'supra' and sublapsarian (or infralapsarian) views. [SUBLAPSARIAN: one who holds that God's decree of election presupposes the fall as past, and as providing redemption for certain individuals already in a fallen and guilty state.—Ed.] We think that God elects people in Christ, but we do not think that he elects whether or not *individuals* should be in Christ. Christ says "If I be lifted up, I will draw all men unto me"—so that there is a universal call, and a universal atonement and a universal gift of the Spirit. But *not* picking out people, as to whether they can be saved or whether they can not (which is very strong in Calvin: some are to be saved through Christ, but others are to be reprobate. Calvin is emphatic, that to believe in the salvation of some means the reprobation of others). That God has determined beforehand whether some should be saved or not, applied to individuals, is objectionable, in that it doesn't make possible the salvation of all men through Christ.

DR. HENRY: What don't you like about this?

DR. WILEY: Well, I don't think God does that. I think God has called *all* men to be saved, but only in Christ, and only those who *reject* are reprobate, and those who are in Christ are the elect.

DR. HENRY: Do you feel the position impairs the love of God?

DR. WILEY: It not only impairs God's love, it impugns God's

justice, for him to decide—regardless of whether a man believes or not—whether he can, whether he will be saved. To me it is out of harmony with the whole tenor of Scripture.

DR. HENRY: And where do you think this Calvinistic doctrine of election leads?

DR. WILEY: Go back in history and you will find that following Jonathan Edwards' great revival, based on preaching the sovereignty of God, people took the position, "Well, if I'm to be saved, I'll be saved; if not, why bestir myself?" It led to discouragement in many cases, and to despair. Finney preached the other side. He tried to balance things, and had a great revival. Now I believe in the sovereignty of God; I think one of the greatest needs in the present day is to preach the sovereignty of God. But not that God elects some to be saved and others to be lost, but that all can come to him through Christ.

DR. NICOLE: I find it objectionable that in the Arminian position the ultimate issues seem to depend upon the choice of man rather than upon the choice of God. And it seems to me that both the Scriptures and a proper understanding of divine sovereignty demand that the choice be left with God rather than with man. Now, precisely throughout Scripture there is a strong emphasis upon this divine priority, even in choice—which is the principle manifested in various areas of life, and which is more particularly emphasized in connection with the specific matter of salvation. The other position, I fear, might lead, when not carefully guarded, to an emphasis upon man—his choosing, his willing, his reason—and ultimately may turn to humanism.

DR. WILEY: I think that Professor Nicole's position reflects one of the great Calvinistic errors concerning Arminianism. The Arminian does not make salvation to rest upon the human will or upon human works. It rests on faith as the appropriating of a gift, the merit of which belongs solely to Christ and not to any human effort. Faith is not a work. Faith is the acceptance of something that comes as a gift; the merit is all of Christ.

DR. NICOLE: The choice is *man's*. . . . It's man's choice.

DR. WILEY: No, it's not a choice of man. It's a *gift of God*—but it must be received in some way.

DR. NICOLE: Yes, but the reason some receive it, and others don't, is no differentiation in the work of God with man, but rather in the *acceptance of man*.

DR. WILEY: Yes, if you mean that the failure to be saved is due to man's own will and rejection of the grace of God. But we believe in prevenient grace. We believe that the very first dawn brings the awakenings of the Spirit, and from that comes conviction, conversion and repentance, saving faith. But it is all the work of the Spirit. Now, we believe that the *power* to believe is of God; the *act* of believing is necessarily our own. That is fundamental in our thinking. It is the work of the Spirit all the way. And that is only exercised at the point of human helplessness and lack of merit. Therefore salvation is all of God, all of grace. But there must be some way of appropriating it and that's by faith.

DR. HENRY: Would you like to comment, Dr. Bromiley?



DR. BROMILEY: Well, I hold a kind of mediating position. The Church of England has never committed itself (of course, there were two or three representatives at Dort, but it didn't really commit itself beyond its own confession, which doesn't give any judgment on the specific issue of the seventeenth century). As against the Arminians, the criticism of the Reformed school seems fairly well founded. To me it seems to presume a freedom of the will (I'm not thinking now of philosophical freedom) which is not in fact real, in the sense of response to the things of God. We have to reckon with the genuine bondage of the sinful will in relation to the message of the Gospel. And it seems to me that Arminianism doesn't reckon seriously enough with that. It almost presumes that this bondage is not so—and that man has the freedom either to respond or not to respond. And even though Arminius himself seems to have stated his position very cautiously, and even the Remonstrance didn't give a very blatant statement, yet that is implicit in the Arminian position, and is almost inevitably bound to lead to the kind of Methodist Arminianism and to the even more liberal forms that we have known in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. That seems to me to be the great weakness of the Arminian position.

On the other hand, quite a few points of difficulty remain in the position taken up at Dort, in its attempt to answer that. I won't do more than just specify them. First of all, their scriptural exegesis gives the impression of being strained. The passages in relation to the universality of the work of Christ seem to most people "explained away" rather than genuinely exegeted and expounded. Secondly, they seem to be rather preoccupied with the data of experience rather than the data of the Gospel. The appeal is always: we evidently see before us certain people who are saved, and certain who are not, and we have to expound this situation; rather than allowing their exposition really to be an exposition of the data of the Bible. Thirdly, there seems to me to be a preoccupation with the question of efficacy rather than of sufficiency, and that really means with the question of what happens *in me* rather than what happened *in Christ*. So that ultimately the Dort position leads in exactly the same direction as the Arminian—to a concentration upon individual believers or non-believers, rather than upon God himself and his saving work. This was not an intention on either side. But in fact they contribute to the broad stream which ultimately gives us the present alternatives. And it is noticeable that the Reformed churches, even where they have attempted to maintain their emphasis, have been vulnerable to the modernist movements, no less than other churches.

DR. HENRY: Has the opposing view in fact led historically where its critics feared it would, when spelled out consistently? Do you think, Dr. Wiley, that the Calvinistic view has actually ended up historically where Arminian theologians warned it would?

DR. WILEY: It leads to despair and destroys human initiative—as well as impugns God's justice and impairs his love.

DR. HENRY: Actually, as you look out upon the Calvinistic movements, do you think they are characterized by this spiritual despair and lack of initiative? Or is there an initiative that reflects a dependence upon Scripture? Or would you grant that historically, Calvinism has not really led to those conclusions to which Arminian theologians say it consistently leads as a system?

DR. WILEY: Well, keep this in mind: what passes for Calvinism—like the Plymouth Brethren—is not Calvinism. It is Arminianized. The fact is, Presbyterianism in this country is Arminianized. Or you might call it modified Calvinism or modified Arminianism. Of course, the old Scottish Calvinism still holds to individual election. I think few folks today teach Calvinism.

DR. HENRY: Do the others hold that Arminianism historically has led to where, for example, Calvin, or at least the opponents of Arminianism in the councils, predicted that it would?

DR. NICOLE: Yes, I think it has precisely. I would have to acknowledge, however, that some Calvinistic churches have also departed from what I conceive to be ideal. But when you consider the Arminians in Holland as a group, there you have an abysmal departure.

DR. WILEY: They are really not Arminians, in the sense of Arminius, at all.

DR. NICOLE: But Arminius was worse in his beliefs than he was in his writings. And the Remonstrance was worse than Arminius' belief, and Episcopius was worse than Arminius, and Limborch was worse than Episcopius! And from then on it was declension, and they were infiltrated by Socinianism. In England the Methodist movement also departed, and precisely at the point I mentioned. For instance, you have the old controversy with J. Agar Beet in which, in the interests of maintaining uniform treatment by God of all people, Beet was led to posit a possibility of salvation after death, and so on, and finally universalism. You have the movement of Methodism in America, and you get finally E. S. Brightman with his finite god. You have a denial even of foreknowledge in McCabe's *Divine Nescience of Future Contingencies*. The emphasis upon human freedom is so strong that it more and more impairs the divine majesty. Now, I am wholly aware that there are evangelical Arminians who do not for a moment sanction these things. But the weight of logic prevails in due time and historically those fruits have been developed.

DR. WILEY: But, after all, wasn't Unitarianism a reaction from New England Calvinism?

DR. NICOLE: Yes. I'm not trying to accuse somebody else from a standpoint of superiority. But if the question is, Do I think that the history of the Arminian movement has led to some things that I feared from the system of doctrine, the only answer I can give is yes.

DR. HENRY: As a church historian, Dr. Bromiley, how do you look at this?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, it is a very complex, historical question. On the one side, I think every Calvinist would have to acknowledge under sober judgment that in evangelism and missionary work he has been far surpassed by the type of movement that grew out of pietism. I don't think in the face of the historical data any Calvinist could suggest that in the modern movement of evangelism and missionary enterprise he has really contributed to the same degree. I'm not trying to say he has done nothing. But it is doubtful that he has made a contribution similar to what he would regard as Arminian movements—though (Continued on page 14)

# Is Capital Punishment Wrong?

JACOB J. VELLENGA

The Church at large is giving serious thought to capital punishment. Church councils and denominational assemblies are making strong pronouncements against it. We are hearing such arguments as: "Capital punishment brutalizes society by cheapening life." "Capital punishment is morally indefensible." "Capital punishment is no deterrent to murder." "Capital punishment makes it impossible to rehabilitate the criminal."

But many of us are convinced that the Church should not meddle with capital punishment. Church members should be strong in supporting good legislation, militant against wrong laws, opposed to weak and partial law enforcement. But we should be sure that what we endorse or what we oppose is intimately related to the common good, the benefit of society, the establishment of justice, and the upholding of high moral and ethical standards.

There is a good reason for saying that opposition to capital punishment is not for the common good but sides with evil; shows more regard for the criminal than the victim of the crime; weakens justice and encourages murder; is not based on Scripture but on a vague philosophical system that makes a fetish of the idea that the taking of life is wrong, under every circumstance, and fails to distinguish adequately between killing and murder, between punishment and crime.

Capital punishment is a controversial issue upon which good people are divided, both having high motives in their respective convictions. But capital punishment should not be classified with social evils like segregation, racketeering, liquor traffic, and gambling.

These evils are clearly antisocial, while capital punishment is a matter of jurisprudence established for the common good and benefit of society. Those favoring capital punishment are not to be stigmatized as heartless, vengeful, and lacking in mercy, but are to be

respected as advocating that which is the best for society as a whole. When we stand for the common good, we must of necessity be strongly opposed to that behavior which is contrary to the common good.

## OLD TESTAMENT ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

From time immemorial the conviction of good society has been that life is sacred, and he who violates the sacredness of life through murder must pay the supreme penalty. This ancient belief is well expressed in Scripture: "Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood. For your lifeblood I will surely require a reckoning; of every beast I will require it and of man; of every man's brother I will require the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed; for God made man in his own image" (Gen. 9:4-6, RSV). Life is sacred. He who violates the law must pay the supreme penalty, just because life is sacred. Life is sacred since God made man in His image. There is a distinction here between murder and penalty.

Many who oppose capital punishment make a strong argument out of the Sixth Commandment: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exod. 20:13). But they fail to note the commentary on that Commandment which follows: "Whoever strikes a man so that he dies shall be put to death. . . . If a man wilfully attacks another to kill him treacherously, you shall take him from my altar that he may die" (Exod. 21:12,14). It is faulty exegesis to take a verse of Scripture out of its context and interpret it without regard to its qualifying words.

The Exodus reference is not the only one referring to capital punishment. In Leviticus 24:17 we read: "He who kills a man shall be put to death." Numbers 35:30-34 goes into more detail on the subject: "If any one kills a person, the murderer shall be put to death on the evidence of witnesses; but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness. Moreover you shall accept no ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death; but he shall be put to death. . . . You shall not thus pollute the land in which you live; for blood pollutes the land, and no expiation can be made for the land, for the blood that is shed in it, except by the blood of him who shed it.

Jacob J. Vellenga served on the National Board of Administration of the United Presbyterian Church from 1948-54. Since 1958 he has served the United Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. as Associate Executive. He holds the A.B. degree from Monmouth College, the B.D. from Pittsburgh-Xenia Seminary, Th.D. from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and D.D. from Monmouth College, Illinois.

You shall not defile the land in which you live, in the midst of which I dwell; for I the Lord dwell in the midst of the people of Israel." (Compare Deut. 17:6-7 and 19:11-13.)

Deuteronomy 19:4-6,10 distinguishes between accidental killing and wilful murder: "If any one kills his neighbor unintentionally without having been at enmity with him in time past . . . he may flee to one of these cities [cities of refuge] and save his life; lest the avenger of blood in hot anger pursue the manslayer and overtake him, because the way is long, and wound him mortally, though the man did not deserve to die, since he was not at enmity with his neighbor in time past. . . . lest innocent blood be shed in your land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance, and so the guilt of bloodshed be upon you."

The cry of the prophets against social evils was not only directed against discrimination of the poor, and the oppression of widows and orphans, but primarily against laxness in the administration of justice. They were opposed to the laws being flouted and criminals not being punished. A vivid expression of the prophet's attitude is recorded in Isaiah: "Justice is turned back, and righteousness stands afar off; for truth has fallen in the public squares, and uprightness cannot enter. . . . The Lord saw it and it displeased him that there was no justice. He saw that there was no man, and wondered that there was no one to intervene; then his own arm brought him victory, and his righteousness upheld him. He put on righteousness as a breastplate, and a helmet of salvation upon his head; he put on garments of vengeance for clothing and wrapped himself in a fury as a mantle. According to their deeds, so will he repay, wrath to his adversaries, requital to his enemies." (Isa. 59:14-18).

#### NEW TESTAMENT ON CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The teachings of the New Testament are in harmony with the Old Testament. Christ came to fulfill the law, not to destroy the basic principles of law and order, righteousness and justice. In Matthew 5:17-20 we read: "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. For truly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not an iota, not a dot, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. . . . For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."

Then Christ speaks of hate and murder: "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment [capital punishment].' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment [capital punishment]" (Matt. 5:21-22). It is evi-

dent that Jesus was not condemning the established law of capital punishment, but was actually saying that hate deserved capital punishment. Jesus was not advocating doing away with capital punishment but urging his followers to live above the law so that law and punishment could not touch them. To live above the law is not the same as abrogating it.

The Church, the Body of Christ, has enough to do to evangelize and educate society to live above the law and positively to influence society to high and noble living by maintaining a wide margin between right and wrong. The early Christians did not meddle with laws against wrong doing. Paul expresses this attitude in his letter to the Romans: "Therefore, he who resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. . . . for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain; he is the servant of God to execute his wrath on the wrongdoer" (13:2-4).

The early Christians suffered many injustices and were victims of inhuman treatment. Many became martyrs because of their faith. Consequently, they were often tempted to take the law in their own hands. But Paul cautioned them: "Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God; for it is written, 'Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord.' No, 'if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head'" (Rom. 12:19-21).

There is not a hint of indication in the New Testament that laws should be changed to make it lenient for the wrongdoer. Rather the whole trend is that the Church leave matters of justice and law enforcement to the government in power. "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God" (Rom. 13:1). Note the juxtaposition of love to enemies with a healthy respect for government. The Christian fellowship is not to take law in its own hands, for God has government in his economy in order to take care of matters of justice.

Jesus' words on loving one's enemies, turning the other cheek, and walking the second mile were not propaganda to change jurisprudence, but they were meant to establish a new society not merely made up of law-abiding citizens but those who lived a life higher than the law, so that stealing, adultery, and murder would become inoperative, but not annulled. The law of love, also called the law of liberty, was not presented to do away with the natural laws of society, but to inaugurate a new concept of law written on the heart where the mainsprings of action are born. The Church is ever to strive for superior law and order, not to advocate a



lower order that makes wrongdoing less culpable.

Love and mercy have no stability without agreement on basic justice and fair play. Mercy always infers a tacit recognition that justice and rightness are to be expected. Lowering the standards of justice is never to be a substitute for the concept of mercy. The Holy God does not show mercy contrary to his righteousness but in harmony with it. This is why the awful Cross was necessary and a righteous Christ had to hang on it. This is why God's redemption is always conditioned by one's heart attitude. There is no forgiveness for anyone who is unforgiving. "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (Matt. 6:12). There is no mercy for anyone who will not be merciful. "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (Matt. 5:7). There is striking similarity to these verses in Psalm 18:25-26: "With the loyal thou dost show thyself loyal; with the blameless man thou dost show thyself blameless; with the pure thou dost show thyself pure; and with the crooked thou dost show thyself perverse."

Professor C. S. Lewis in his recent book *Reflections on the Psalms* deals with the difficult subject of the spirit of hatred which is in some of the Psalms. He points out that these hatreds had a good motivation. "Such hatreds are the kind of thing that cruelty and injustice, by a sort of natural law, produce. . . . Not to perceive it at all—not even to be tempted to resentment—to accept it as the most ordinary thing in the world—argues a terrifying insensibility. Thus the absence of anger, especially that sort of anger which we call indignation, can, in my opinion, be a most alarming symptom. . . . If the Jews cursed more bitterly than the Pagans this was, I think, at least in part because they took right and wrong more seriously."

Vindictiveness is a sin, but only because a sense of justice has gotten out of hand. The check on revenge must be in the careful and exact administering of justice by society's government. This is the clear teaching of Scripture in both the Old and New Testaments. The Church and individual Christians should be active in their witness to the Gospel of love and forgiveness and ever lead people to the high law of love of God and our neighbors as ourselves; but meanwhile wherever and whenever God's love and mercy are rejected, as in crime, natural law and order must prevail, not as extraneous to redemption but as part of the whole scope of God's dealings with man.

The argument that capital punishment rules out the possibility of repentance for crime is unrealistic. If a wanton killer does not repent when the sentence of death is upon him, he certainly will not repent if he has 20 to 50 years of life imprisonment ahead of him.

We, who are supposed to be Christian, make too much of physical life. Jesus said, "And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather

fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matt. 10:28). Laxness in law tends to send both soul and body to hell. It is more than a pious remark when a judge says to the condemned criminal: "And may God have mercy on your soul." The sentence of death on a killer is more redemptive than the tendency to excuse his crime as no worse than grand larceny.

It is significant that when Jesus voluntarily went the way of the Cross he chose the capital punishment of his day as his instrument to save the world. And when he gave redemption to the repentant thief he did not save him from capital punishment but gave him Paradise instead which was far better. We see again that mercy and forgiveness are something different than being excused from wrongdoing.

No one can deny that the execution of a murderer is a horrible spectacle. But we must not forget that murder is more horrible. The supreme penalty should be exacted only after the guilt is established beyond the shadow of a doubt and only for wanton, willful, premeditated murder. But the law of capital punishment must stand, no matter how often a jury recommends mercy. The law of capital punishment must stand as a silent but powerful witness to the sacredness of God-given life. Words are not enough to show that life is sacred. Active justice must be administered when the sacredness of life is violated.

It is recognized that this article will only impress those who are convinced that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament are the supreme authority of faith and practice. If one accepts the authority of Scripture, then the issue of capital punishment must be decided on what Scripture actually teaches and not on the popular, naturalistic ideas of sociology and penology that prevail today. One generation's thinking is not enough to comprehend the implications of the age-old problem of murder. We need the best thinking of the ages on how best to deal with crime and punishment. We need the Word of God to guide us. END

## With Jonah

Only a single cooling plant  
Surrounds our troubled minds;  
A worm and wind drive us to death. We cry.  
And God cries, "You love my plant? I love your people  
Discerning not their right hand from their left!"

We sit and watch and wonder in our little booths of self,  
Discerning not our right hand from our left  
While Nineveh repents.

J. HERBERT FRETZ

# The Pre-eminent Christ

MASSEY MOTT HELTZEL

*"... that in everything he might be pre-eminent" (Colossians 1:18b)*

Not long ago a Christian layman said to me: "I have no trouble believing in God as Creator. When I look at the moon and the stars, I just know that there is a God. But when it comes to Christ, I have to take my religion entirely on faith. Unless, he said wistfully, and it seemed hopefully, "Unless somehow Christ can be tied in with all that."

## PRE-EMINENT IN CREATION

How earnestly Paul would have talked with that man! He would have tied Christ in indeed, would have shown that he is supreme in "all that." He would have shown him, as he showed the Colossians, what we must call, for want of a simpler term, the cosmic pre-eminence of Christ. To them he presented Christ, as pre-eminent *in creation*, "the firstborn," meaning that he was himself a creature but that he holds priority and supremacy over all created things. He comes before what my friend referred to as "all that," the wonder and immensity of the universe.

False teaching had crept into the church at Colosse. It did not ignore Christ; it simply relegated him to a position of relative unimportance. It gave chief emphasis to certain Jewish rites, to angel worship, to asceticism and severity to the body. It relied on philosophy and tradition and man's intellectual abilities. It made a place for Christ, but a very insignificant one.

Paul, in hoping to head off these heresies, did not begin with a frontal attack on erroneous views. He simply took his readers straight to the overwhelming fact of Christ, the majesty of his Person, and the grandeur of his work. He pointed them to the central Figure of history and called him pre-eminent, meaning first in honor and dignity, chief in rank and power. If he could just help the Colossian Christians to come to grips with the overmastering truth of Christ—who he

Massey Mott Heltzel is Minister of Ginter Park Presbyterian Church, Richmond, Virginia. From 1945-55 he was Minister of Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church, Augusta, Georgia, where President Eisenhower attended during vacations. The President remarked to a friend concerning Dr. Heltzel that he "liked a minister that preaches the Gospel without frills."

was and what he had done—they would get rid of the false teachings poisoning their belief and worship.

So, a good place to begin, as my lay friend would have agreed, was with the pre-eminence of Christ in the universe. Did they realize that this Christ was the very agent of creation? "In him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible." This fact alone would give him everlasting pre-eminence. He had brought all things into being. He is Creator, not creature. Would the Colossians put angels, who were creatures, above Christ, who is Creator? Christ is also the goal of creation: "all things were created . . . for him." All things must glorify him, and one purpose of creation is to make him supreme. Thus Paul "tied in" Christ with the cosmos, universal order and harmony.

But there is something else here. Christ is pre-eminent not only because he is the agent of creation and the goal of creation, but also because he is the sustainer of creation: "In him all things hold together." It would be expected that the Colossians would feel the effects of Greek philosophy. Now the great problem of philosophy was: what is the constituent principle of the universe, the unifying cause, the coordinating force—what brings things into being and then holds them together? Thales, the father of philosophy, who lived more than five hundred years before Christ, said that water was the ultimate principle, that all things came from water, were held together by it, and returned to it. Some who came after him said that the great principle was air, and others, fire. But here was Paul, the inspired Christian thinker, saying "He (Christ) is both the First Principle and the Upholding Principle of the whole scheme of creation" (Col. 1:17, Phillips' *Letters to Young Churches*). He is what the philosophers had long been searching for. He is, as John put it in his Gospel, the Logos, God's creative wisdom in action.

The agent of creation, the goal of creation, the sustainer of creation is surely pre-eminent in the universe. If the Colossians could once grasp the over-powering idea of his greatness, they would cease stressing things of lesser import. If they could "tie him in" with the

great scheme of created things, they would be delivered from dangerous doctrine. Then they, and we, would recognize Christ as Sovereign of all that we are and have. For even angels, instead of being worshiped, must worship him.

"Let angels prostrate fall;  
And crown him Lord of all."

#### PRE-EMINENT IN THE CHURCH

Next, Paul pointed out, Christ is pre-eminent in the Church: "He is the head of the body, the Church." He is supreme in the universe which he made and in the Church which he purchased with his blood. He is the ruler of his Church, its guiding Spirit, the source of its life and breath. "The Church is a body in the sense that it is a living organism, composed of members vitally united to each other, each member with his own place and function, each essential to the body's perfect health, each dependent on the rest of the body for its life and well-being, while the whole organism and all the individual members derive all their life from the Head and act under his guidance" (A. S. Peake, in *The Expositor's Greek Testament*). What would happen if the church at Colosse should turn to something else than Christ, "Not holding fast to the Head, from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God?" Obviously, the Church if severed from its Head, would die. So Paul warned his readers against giving first place in their church life to questions of food and drink, to feast days and new moons and sabbaths, to visions and the worship of angels and the puffing up of the sensuous mind, to human tradition and self-abasement. Rather, if they would survive as a Christian community in a pagan society, they must cling to him who had been given pre-eminence in the Church: God's Son, their Saviour.

In Asia Minor, the many gods and religions of the Graeco-Roman world were often combined into an hideous admixture of belief and worship. "Some who shared in pagan philosophies had also adopted some Jewish practices, and now were ready to pay reverence also to Jesus and accept parts of the Christian teaching. This they thought wise, broad-minded, and tolerant. Evidently some in the church at Colosse were tempted by this attitude. They were inclined to regard Jesus as only one of a number of divine lords to whom they could look for help" (Floyd V. Filson, *Opening the New Testament*, p. 147).

In every age the Church must be warned against this lenient tendency. She is never free of those who argue that one religion is as good as another, who try to fit Christianity into a grand combining scheme, who do not ignore Jesus, but who place him among religious leaders such as Moses, Confucius, Buddha, and

Mohammed. Such treatment may help other religions, but it would destroy Christianity. For our faith is distinctive, it is based on unique facts, on events that never occurred before and can never occur again. It is not just a philosophy among all the world's philosophies. We may speak of it as William Cowper, in his great hymn, speaks of the Bible:

"It gives a light to every age;  
It gives, but borrows none."

When Christianity starts borrowing it starts weakening its own case. For to borrow means to admit that something is lacking and that Christianity is incomplete and inadequate without the help it can get from other sources. I am not saying that there is nothing good in other religions, but simply that when Christianity loses its distinctiveness, and tries to become like the others, when it becomes a matter of omissions here and accretions there, it is doomed because it is "not holding fast to the Head." Always the Church needs a Tertullian to insist that no attempt be made to square Christianity with any philosophical system. Better still, it needs a Paul to contend that Christ is all or nothing at all, the only Head of the Church.

In its better moments, the Church has accorded him pre-eminence. It has kept him at the heart of its faith and the center of its creed. Its members have been captivated by his greatness. They have not tried to think of God apart from him. They have realized that "in him are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." They have not relied on what Paul speaks of here as "philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition." They have not gloried in intellectual superiority. They have not been deluded by "beguiling speech." They have been rightly related to the Church's Head.

In its vital hours, Christ has been the center of the Church's worship. He, and not angels or any other lesser beings, has received the adoration of believing hearts. If we would see the Church blessed in our day with vibrant spirituality, we must constantly strive to build our religious life on him alone. We must increasingly make him the object of our faith, the subject of our song. All of our spiritual concepts must be derived from his meaning in human history. We must not speak vaguely just of religion, but of Christianity; not just of God, but of Christ. In our hymns and anthems, in all our prayers and preaching and teaching, we must show that we have been so conquered by his greatness that we have made the grand capitulation and yielded to his grace and power.

In her good days the Church has made him the center of her whole life. The body has been fully united with the Head. Her people have realized that they "have come to fullness of life in him," and that there can be no warmth and depth of spiritual life without him. They have made him supreme in their daily liv-



ing, so that he has never been far from their thoughts and affections. Many have been overwhelmed with the pre-eminence of Christ as were Marcus Dods, the erudite scholar, and Alexander Whyte, the mighty preacher. In their long Saturday afternoon walks together they discussed many things. But Dr. Whyte said, "Whatever we started off with in our conversations, we soon made across country, somehow, to Jesus of Nazareth; to his death, and his resurrection and his indwelling." So must the Church keep on doing, in Colosse and everywhere, if it would live. "For he is the head of the body, the Church."

#### PRE-EMINENT IN SOTERIOLOGY

We cannot deal with all that Paul said in this rich passage, but we must see how he showed that Christ is pre-eminent in *God's dealings with men*. First, "He is the image of the invisible God." If Paul could get the Colossians to understand that, they would never again make Christ subordinate to angels or any other so-called mediating spirits. Christ was the very manifestation of God among men. Surely, nothing could be supreme over that! God had sent his own Son to deal with his people. Would they scorn this fact, would they ignore the One who had come as the image of the invisible God, and would they try to win the favor of God with their monotonous observances and their severe restrictions of meat and drink?

Moreover, "in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell." Once they saw this truth, could they ever put their trust in angels again? Christ is not just one of many intermediaries: he is the one Mediator between heaven and earth. He bridged the awful gulf which they saw stretching between God and man. The fullness of divine nature actually dwells in him. He possesses the totality of the divine qualities and powers. This was the manner in which God came to deal with sinful men: he sent One who is his image, in whom his fullness dwells. Could the Colossians imagine anything grander than that, anything that would make God more accessible? In all of God's dealings with his people, Jesus Christ is pre-eminent; he occupies the chief place.

Through him God is able "to reconcile all things . . . making peace by the blood of his cross." The angels could not reconcile; they had not the slightest power to make sinners right with a holy God. Christ is pre-eminent in God's dealings with men: he made atonement, paying the price for sin, doing what man could never do for himself and what no one except Christ could ever do for him. Never is his pre-eminence more clearly seen than here. He is the only sufficient Saviour, the grand reconciler between God and men. He rightly claims love and loyalty over anyone or anything else, and the Colossians were in danger of not according

Him this. In all of God's dealings with men, the chief Person is Christ, and the chief place is a Cross. He climaxed it all by his atoning death. Nowhere else has he so forcibly demonstrated his right to pre-eminence. General Booth stated the matter succinctly and memorably when he said: "The Jews would have believed in him if he had come down from the cross. We believe in him because he stayed up" (A. M. Hunter, *The Gospel According to St. Mark*, p. 144). Paul wanted the Colossians to know that his staying up marked the high point in God's great work of redemption. "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and translated us to the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins." The Cross should have been so overmastering that the Colossians could never give in to the heresies that were vexing the Church.

One other matter in God's dealings with men must not be overlooked: Christ is "the firstborn from the dead." Indeed, it is in this connection that the words of our text occur. One purpose of the resurrection of Christ is that he might be eternally supreme: "He is the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be pre-eminent." God had done this mighty deed, he had raised him from the dead, in order to make him forever first in honor and dignity, chief in rank and power. Would the church at Colosse ignore this tremendous truth? Had it heard of anything else so full of glory and might? If it wanted to be in touch with God, could it do better than join itself to the One whom God had made victorious over death, the One who is pre-eminent in all of God's work for men? And can we do better than entrust ourselves to the risen, exalted Christ, the living Lord?

After World War I, Arthur Balfour, philosopher and former prime minister, was lecturing at Edinburgh University on pathways to a new world. He pleaded for knowledge in world affairs, for training in statecraft, and for what he vaguely called "morality." He had no sooner finished than a Chinese student called out, "But, sir, what about Jesus Christ?"

It is bad enough when such a question must be put to a statesman in a Christian country. But must we not with shame confess that it may, with reason, be put to us churchmen and as individual Christians? Colossians, Virginians, Presbyterians—what about Jesus Christ? Why is he so often omitted in preaching, teaching, and conversation about religion? We simply cannot escape the personal note in this question which persists in pressing in upon us: what about Jesus Christ? God help us to say, with meaning, "This about him: no matter what we may have done before, from this day forward, in our theology, our worship, our witness, our daily living, he will be pre-eminent. From this day our creed and confession will be 'Jesus is Lord.'" END

## Bible Text of the Month

*Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven: for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you (Matthew 5:10-12).*

¶ This is the peculiar blessing of the elect of God, and it stands high up in the list of honour. The only homage which wickedness can pay to righteousness is to persecute it. Those who in the first blessing were poor in spirit, are here despised as well as poverty-stricken; and in this they get a new royal charter, which for the second time ensures to them "the kingdom of heaven." Yea, they have the kingdom now: it is their present possession. Not because of any personal fault, but simply on account of their godly character, the Lord's Daniels are hated.

CHARLES SPURGEON

### CAUSE OF PERSECUTION

¶ It is striking to reflect how the history of the coming ages must have stood before the Redeemer when he spoke these words. The cause of this antagonism we find expressed in John 3:20, "Every one that doeth evil hateth the light." The Christian is, by his very appearance, a moving conscience to excuse or condemn the children of the world. On the other hand, John 7:7 discloses another reason of this enmity: the Christian, and, above all, the Apostles, must by the testimony of their word condemn the nature of the world. A. THOLUCK

¶ Because you are not of the world, saith Christ, the world hates you. The saint's nature and life are antipodes to the world; fire and water, heaven and hell, may as soon be reconciled as they with it. The heretic is his enemy for truth's sake; the profane for holiness' sake; to both the Christian is an abomination, as the Israelite to the Egyptian. Hence come wars; the fire of persecution never goes out in the hearts of the wicked, who say in their hearts as they once with their lips, "Christians to the lions."

WILLIAM GURNALL

¶ But blessed be God, that although enemies have in all ages spoken all manner of evil against us, yet they have done it falsely, and for Christ's sake; wherefore we may take up their books written against us, and "wear them as a crown." "Do well and bear it, is written upon

heaven's gates," said the martyr, Bradford. "Christ himself," saith father Latimer, "was misreported, and falsely accused, both as touching his words and meaning also." Count it not strange to be traduced, disgraced, scandalized. Austere John hath a devil; sociable Christ is a wine-bibber, and the scribes and Pharisees (whose words carry such credit) say as much. It is but a vain persuasion for any child of God to think, by any discretion, wholly to still the clamours and hates of wicked men. In the meantime, let our lives give them the lie—confute them by a real apology.

JOHN TRAPP

### FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS' SAKE

¶ But it must be endured for righteousness' sake, to secure the blessing promised. Men often refer to the opposition which they meet, and the persecutions they undergo, as a proof of their rectitude. But this in itself is no proof at all. The opposition must result from righteous acts, or it is no evidence of the favor of God.

JOHN J. OWEN

¶ The necessity of suffering persecution, in order to being a true Christian, has undoubtedly by some been carried to an extreme, and the doctrine has been abused. It has been looked upon necessary to uphold a man's credit amongst others as a Christian, that he should be persecuted. I have heard it made an objection against the sincerity of particular persons, that they were no more hated and reproached. And the manner of glorying in persecution has in some been very wrong, so as has had too much of an appearance of lifting up themselves in it, that they were very much hated and reviled, more than most, as an evidence of their excelling others, in being good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Such an improvement of the doctrine of persecution has a direct tendency to cause those that would be accounted true Christians, to behave themselves so towards those that are not well affected to religion, as to provoke their hatred, or at least to be but little careful to avoid it, and not very studiously and earnestly to strive

(after the apostles' example and precepts), to please them to their edification, and by meekness and gentleness to win them.

JONATHAN EDWARDS

### BLESSEDNESS OF THE PERSECUTED

¶ The particular reason our Lord assigns for pronouncing those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake happy, is, that "theirs is the kingdom of heaven." The phrase is commonly considered as equivalent to, "They shall enjoy celestial happiness." I have no doubt this is included in it, but this is by no means all that is included in it. It is not, "Theirs shall be the kingdom of heaven" though that is true, but "theirs is the kingdom of heaven" even while suffering for righteousness' sake. The kingdom of heaven is the new economy, the order of things under the Messiah.

JOHN BROWN

¶ It is the nature of true grace to grow up with difficulties. As the ark rose higher with the waters, so likewise the soul grows higher and higher, it mounts up as discouragements and oppositions grow. Nay, the soul takes vigour and strength from discouragements, as the wind increaseth the flame. So the grace of God, the more the winds and waves of affliction oppose it, with so much the more violence it breaks through all oppositions, until it attains the desired hope.

RICHARD SIBBES

¶ In Christ's conception of the blessed life I find that even the enemy himself is made a contributor. Why, Christ shows us how flowers grow in the night-time, how the wilderness may rejoice and blossom as the rose, how the black devil with sharp teeth and eyes of fire is the servant of the good man, and waits upon him and ministers to his joy. O that we might enter into this meaning, then all things would be ours, life, death, height, depth—our servants would be a multitude among which would be found the angels of God.

JOSEPH PARKER

¶ For your reward: that is, not merely the general reward of grace which in the kingdom of heaven awaits you; but in addition there shall be, for every affliction and for every wicked word which you have to endure as expedient for the confirmation of your faith to yourselves, a distinct, and precisely apportioned requital and compensation—the more ye suffer, the more the reward. . . . The reward is reserved in the heavens. Him whom they tolerated no longer under the heaven, heaven will receive into itself!

RUDOLPH STIER

## DIVINE ELECTION

(Continued from page 6) he may deplore the way they have done it and the results of it. Then secondly, of course, there is a certain measure of truth, you know, in the judgment that Calvinism—worked out in its pure sense—does not really lead to the kind of thing that we often associate with the Reformed or Calvinistic nations. In the Highlands of Scotland, for instance, although there is a certain amount of national temperament there, there are some instances from the last century of the type of thing that Dr. Wiley was speaking about. People became preoccupied with this question of their own personal standing in grace and were really "fit for nothing" in doing any active work for the Gospel or for anything else in ordinary life. And a good deal of the activism of the Calvinist nations is due to an infiltration of other elements—of moralistic elements and later Puritanism, for instance, often associated with the deistic tendency. So that we cannot glibly assume that because certain movements took place in Reformed countries, they were wholly fruits of Calvinism, as is often done by Calvinistic apologies. On the other hand, I think we have to say this in favor of the Calvinists, that the evangelistic and missionary movement of the last century was almost "easy game," as it were, for liberalism, that the whole tendency of the evangelical movement in that century in its Arminian forms was towards the liberalism of the twentieth century. You can see that in its social work. You can see it in some of its missionary work. You can see it in a lot of its evangelism and its aftermath. So that, although they perhaps took the lead as one might expect in extending the universal offer of Christ, they tended to do so in such a way that the liberalism that we know is almost, so far as one can speak in that way, an inevitable historical consequence. After all, Schleiermacher was brought up in the pietistic circles, pietist of the pietists.

DR. HENRY: We have said that Calvinism has sometimes led to lack of missionary passion, to preoccupation with personal salvation, and perhaps to indifference to the ethical fruits of salvation. And that Arminianism has led to a concentration on social service, to sentimental notions of universal salvation, and so on. Do you think these objectionable fruits follow from Calvinism or Arminianism exclusively, or that these same results might follow from other contributing factors?

DR. WILEY: That thought has been in my mind. I don't think that these things flow from either Calvinism or Arminianism. Well, take, for instance, the humanistic movement. I don't know that that originated in Arminianism. I don't believe latitudinarianism in England was a result of Arminianism at all. I grant Dr. Nicole that Calvinism as a rule is narrow in its views, and the old saying is "if you want to make a stream strong, you have to make it narrow." But the idea of toleration has been associated with Arminianism too much.

DR. NICOLE: Well, it certainly would be precarious to isolate just one factor and say, this is the source of the whole situation. There are many factors that affect men, and in examining the origins of any particular movement it is wise to balance the various elements. However, I rather recognize Arminianism long before Arminius. Some of its dominant traits, in my judgment, are found in some phases of the Greek church; and in some of the teachings, although here in an exaggerated form, in Pelagius; and in the dominant movements of semi-Pelagianism that engulfed the Roman Catholic church; and in

the Renaissance rather than the Reformation. Then right within the Reformation movement itself came Arminianism, and latitudinarianism in the Church of England and other elements of that kind. It may be bias, but I would recognize the stream in various places and correlate some of those phenomena as belonging to one basic factor. I recognize that probably many evangelical Arminians would take strong objection and feel that this is an arbitrary oversimplification, and that they want nothing in common with Pelagius.

DR. BROMILEY: There are many historical factors, so that the thing works itself out in different nations in different ways, and we can't just oversimplify and say this comes from that. I would like here really to be a good Calvinist and to say: The source of all these perversions is the bondage of the mind and will of man. So that in every movement in the Church there is always that temptation or that pressure back to a Pelagian scheme, to put man in the place where Christ ought to be. And however carefully we guard against that, and sometimes by the very way in which we try to guard against it, we may in the long run help it forward in the next generation. Whether we are Arminians or Calvinists, we need to see that in the Scriptures God is always "the one who fills the picture" and we ourselves are related to him. Now the temptation to get away from that is equally strong in Arminianism and in historic Calvinism. So that through these historical movements and factors, we see always in the Church that reversion or inversion from a genuine objectivism to subjectivism. We can see it happening before us in our own day.

DR. HENRY: Was not Arminius really "more Calvinistic" than most Protestantism today, regardless of denomination?

DR. WILEY: Arminius was always Reformed. But he differed on the decrees.

DR. HENRY: Arminius held a view of human corruption, did he not, deeper than that in much contemporary American Protestant theology.

DR. BROMILEY: I think so. Unless you take the really strict Dort followers, I think that judgment would probably be true. The majority of American evangelicals or British evangelicals have more Arminian teaching than the actual statements that we have of the Remonstrance.

DR. HENRY: Would this be true also of the post-Niebuhr views? . . . That despite the impact of Niebuhr on contemporary theology, and the so-called realistic theology, contemporary theology is nonetheless sub-Arminian in orientation?

DR. WILEY: If I understand you, I think that is quite right.

DR. NICOLE: Well, there are notable exceptions, like almost the whole Christian Reformed Church, and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, and others. But if you take Christendom at large probably that would be true.

DR. BROMILEY: There are certain people on the Continent of whom that might not be true, of course. I'm thinking more specifically of English-speaking forms of evangelicalism. Some of the older tradition remain in the Church of England.

DR. HENRY: What of the Free Church in Scotland?



DR. BROMILEY: Well, they tend on the whole to take the historic position of Dort or the Westminster Confession, so it wouldn't be true of them.

DR. HENRY: And, of course, a remnant in many American denominations retains these convictions. This question, then: What makes Niebuhrian thought sub-Arminian in its doctrine of corruption?

DR. BROMILEY: It seems to me that Niebuhr really reads off the history of man's corruption from the data of history rather than from the Gospel. It is "very nice" that the Gospel happens to be in agreement with it. And therefore, Niebuhr's view is just as strong or just as weak as history.

DR. HENRY: If Arminius were here, what would he say to contemporary theology?

DR. WILEY: Well, Arminius believed in total depravity as much as the Reformers. There is no difference there. Older Calvinism held that there has to be an impartation of life before there can be faith or repentance. Arminius would take the position of free grace. We hold to a prevenient grace given to all mankind. In some sense that is a mitigated depravity, but it doesn't affect the nature of depravity. It simply means that God gives his Spirit to all people so that they can repent.

DR. NICOLE: I think we are asking in what respects even Arminius can give us a deeper sense of man's depravity, and therefore a deeper sense of the urgency of the Gospel. About all I can say is, let's read Arminius, and discover that even Arminius has more of a sense of depravity than many present-day theologians have.

DR. HENRY: And he did not have a superficial doctrine of the new birth—as is often preached today—simply in terms of the renewing work of the Holy Spirit, quite independently of any doctrine of imputation and justification. For, certainly, imputation and justification and the substitutionary and propitiatory work of Christ are essential to Arminian doctrine, are they not?

DR. BROMILEY: It seems to me that Arminius would say of the modern view that it really isn't an exposition of the biblical doctrine. Arminius, rightly or wrongly, was attempting to state the biblical theology and quite honestly I suppose believed that he was doing just that. But I don't think he would really find that in our modern sociological theologians.

DR. HENRY: We are saying that both Arminius and Calvin were biblical in intention, and this intention to bring themselves under the biblical norm holds a lesson for contemporary theology. Would it not be well now to orient the discussion of election itself to the question of a biblical basis? Let's ask what biblical loyalties on the one hand commit us to our views, and create anxieties about alternative positions. I suppose, Dr. Wiley, that you would regard certain passages as the bulwark of the Arminian view.

DR. WILEY: I view election or predestination, of course, as a class; the elect are those who are in Christ. Ephesians states a *purpose*: we are chosen in Christ unto holiness and obedience. Then Paul gives the *method*, which is predestination—predestinated, adopted as children by Jesus Christ to himself.

The Scriptures call individuals to a position of faith in Christ, and here I make somewhat of foreknowledge: Peter's verse, "elect according to the foreknowledge of God through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth unto obedience," and so on. Romans says, "Those whom he foreknew, those he did predestinate; and those he predestinated, he called, and those he called, he justified, and those he justified, he glorified." I take that, however, not as an essential string of causes but as an order. When I think of foreknowledge, I take the same position as Wesley and Calvin—that strictly speaking there is no foreknowledge and no after-knowledge with God. The only place I differ is that Calvin said no relation exists between foreknowledge and predestination, which I can't share. I think God knows everything in a moment's grasp. He doesn't choose people because they are good. We don't believe that. But I do think that he *knows* those who will believe in Christ. He sees their *faith*. As a result of that, his plan is that they be conformed to the image of Christ. I think the next step is the call, and then justification, and so on.

DR. HENRY: Let me reassure myself about your position. The doctrine of foreknowledge seems to me to raise essentially the same question as the doctrine of election in relationship to individuals in this respect, that *prior to the moment of psychological determination on the part of the individual* it ascribes to God certain knowledge of the future. Now, if this is involved in foreknowledge, must not all objection be removed to its presence in election?

DR. WILEY: We maintain that both belong to God, but that it is preposterous to represent one as dependent on the other. When we attribute foreknowledge to God, we mean that all things are perpetually before his eyes, so that to his knowledge nothing is future or past. All things are present in such a manner that he does not merely conceive of them from ideas formed in his mind but really beholds and sees them. And this foreknowledge extends to the whole world and to all creatures. Wesley takes the position that God foresees who will believe. And I think that view of foreknowledge is right.

DR. HENRY: You accept, then, the idea that God foreknows certain events prior to their determination by individuals, and that on the basis of this foreknowledge he elects them?

DR. WILEY: No, I don't think he elects them on the basis of foreknowledge. I think he just knows who will believe, and those who believe will be the elect. We are not predestinated to life or death; we are predestinated to the adoption of children.

DR. HENRY: Suppose you indicate, Dr. Nicole, what you think is the biblical basis for the Reformed view of election.

DR. NICOLE: Well, it may be subdivided into two parts, as it were. There is a general trend in Scripture which indicates principles of divine government and divine action, giving a broad basis for the whole elective purpose. And then specific passages support precisely the view that God has chosen some to salvation and has bypassed the others and confined them to the damnation which they justly deserve in view of their sins. Shall I develop the latter part? It will be found mostly in the New Testament. "No man can come to me, except the Father, which hath sent me draw him" (John 6:44). A passage like John 15:16: "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you. . . ." Or a passage like that in

Acts: "As many as were ordained to eternal life believed" (13:48). In the whole of Romans 9 through 11—especially in chapter 9—the priority of the election to the commission of any particular acts is set forth with very strong emphasis. Ephesians 1:4 and 11 are very significant, where the election is particularly mentioned as according to the good pleasure of God's will. The passages dealing with foreknowledge are not at all difficult to integrate, inasmuch as the term foreknowledge in Scripture does not have merely the connotation of advance information (which the term commonly has in nontheological language), but indicates God's special choice coupled with affection. In the Hebrew-Greek Scriptures *to know* connotes much more than "to have intellectual perception" of a certain thing. Therefore in Romans 8:29, for instance, "For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son," and so on, the sequence does not, in our judgment, connote that the ground of the predestination is advance information that God had that these men would believe, although, of course, he does obviously have knowledge of all events past, present, and future. And similarly, in Peter: "elect according to the foreknowledge of God," here again the word foreknowledge would require more than merely an intellectual content.

DR. WILEY: Election is in Christ and election must take place through Christ, of course. But those in Christ are the elect. The point Arminians oppose is that God elects certain individuals to be in Christ and certain individuals not. For instance, take Matthew 8:11: "The Son of man is come to save that which was lost." Now, that is entirely out of harmony with the idea that God wills some to be saved and some to be reprobate. "Even so, it is not the will of your Father which is in heaven that *one* of these little ones should perish." Take John 3:16: "For God so loved the world," and so on—that evidently refers to the world in general. "For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved." Now, there is no room in there at all for God reprobating people. "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And then he goes on to say: "Ye will not come to me that ye might have life." There are many others. In II Corinthians, "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead: and that he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again." In Galatians, "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." In I Timothy, "Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth. . . . Who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." And in John, "He is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world." And in Hebrews 2:9: "That he by the grace of God should taste death for every man." In James, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded." Now in Ephesians, "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love." I don't think it can mean anything but the purpose of God. "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will," refers to the fact that his purpose is the adoption of

children by Jesus Christ to himself and not that he is selecting individuals to be in Christ. I'll grant to Dr. Nicole that there is an election to *service*, but no individual election to salvation. We think that all those Scriptures are against it.

DR. HENRY: On what general principles do Calvinists reply?

DR. NICOLE: Some of the verses indicate only the fulfillment of certain conditions which all the Calvinists grant are involved in the obtaining of salvation—like faith, or repentance, or drawing nigh unto God. But Calvinists insist that those people who actually fulfill these conditions do not operate "on their own," as it were, but that they have been led by God's specific grace, which is in this case, an elective grace.

DR. WILEY: That is what we call prevenient grace, you know.

DR. NICOLE: Yes. But we would say that it is a prevenient grace not uniformly given to all, but given to some by the appointment of God to the exception of the others.

DR. WILEY: This is what we disagree with in Calvinism.

DR. NICOLE: I accept wholeheartedly the position of Calvin.

DR. HENRY: How does Barth propose to meet these issues?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, of course, he agrees with the Arminian emphasis—as it was already stated in the Remonstrance statement—that we must see the election wholly in relation to Christ, which he also feels is left out by the Calvinists. They begin with the prior decree of God, which really has very little to do with Christ at all; Christ is merely "dragged in," as it were, as an agent for the fulfillment of this decree, which is an absolute unknown decree, according to the Calvinistic interpretation. But Barth doesn't think the Arminians can in fact fruitfully work out their position because of their Arminianism. He attempts to bring this Arminian thesis into a setting, as he would take it, of Reformed theology, as he claims was attempted by the Bremen delegation at the Synod of Dort, but which did not meet with the approval of the Synod. Now Barth really, in effect, is attempting in his own way—which I grant gives rise to a lot of problems that I don't see that he has really solved—to work out the lead suggested by the Bremen delegation—election in Christ really taken absolutely seriously—but purged of its Arminian connotations. And he claims for various reasons that any attempt to work out a doctrine of predestination either in terms of an absolute unknown God or in terms merely of the efficacy in the individual believer is virtually to make of Christ simply an instrument, and therefore to deprive him of his proper place, his proper honor, his proper position—and so long as we do that, we are ultimately unbiblical, and are bound to finish with a futile controversy, because Christ is the center of the Scriptures.

DR. HENRY: But what difficulties and problems does Barth's formulation give us?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, he has a twofold difficulty. On the one side, he has to steer clear of universalism, which is, of course, a pressing danger, if you have a universal objective atonement in the sense that he wants to develop it: a really strict doctrine of substitution linked with an actual elective will which in Christ would comprehend all. There is a very distinct pressure towards universalism.

DR. NICOLE: Which leads him to say, for instance, that all are justified and all are sanctified, by which he means all men?

DR. BROMILEY: He means by that that all are in the substitute, in Christ.

DR. NICOLE: In him they are all justified and all sanctified?

DR. BROMILEY: He doesn't mean by that that everyone is necessarily saved—that is what he tries to avoid. But there is obviously pressure towards universalism if you work it out in that way. If you avoid universalism, you get the definite difficulty which he himself does in fact face and can't solve, of the sovereignty of the work of the Spirit—how it is that some do in effect repent and believe and enter into Christ, and some (though we can't say definitely who they are) presumably do not. And all he can really say on that score is to leave it in terms of John 3, "The wind bloweth where it listeth." But that seems to bring one back really to this unknown sovereignty that he is trying to get rid of. That is the problem on the face of it.

DR. NICOLE: Does not Barth leave us with a disparity in design between the three persons of the trinity? The Son is the substitute for all, while the Holy Spirit applies redemption only to some?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, Barth tries to work out that objection. He has never really worked it out satisfactorily to my mind. He desperately wants to avoid leaving the decision with man. But he has tended to hint that the Holy Spirit gives man freedom in and through the preaching of the Gospel, and what man is left to do is simply to use the freedom which he is given. If he does not do that, then he simply remains in bondage. But if he uses a *given* freedom he does not in fact free himself. Barth seeks to work it out in those terms.

DR. NICOLE: The Son blows over all the world and the Spirit bloweth where it listeth!

DR. BROMILEY: Well, where the Gospel is preached the Spirit will in fact give life to the dead, and it is left for the individual either to use his freedom or simply not do so. In which case he cannot claim that he himself has really done anything that he was not given.

DR. WILEY: How do you, Dr. Nicole, bring those Scriptures together and hold that God created some to be reprobate and created some to be saved? Why all those Scriptures that say God willeth not the death of any, and so on?

DR. NICOLE: Well, this really brings us back to the main matter. I believe that before election is spoken of, it would be wise to talk about the common fall of man. I don't think that God created man just for the purpose of having some people to damn. But I believe that God, having in his own decree, in his own counsel, determined to create and to permit the fall, has in the presence of this fallen humanity determined to select some people out of his own mercy (and not in view of merit or any foreseen action on their part) to redeem them in Jesus Christ and effectually to apply to them the benefits of salvation, and to bypass the others. And this is not an election of class; this is an election of individuals. Now, in view of that, certain Scriptures need careful exposition. Dr. Bromiley suggests that at times the Calvinist appears to have

an artificial explanation, and I concede that some Scriptures taken in themselves can be interpreted in a different way. But under the pressure of the total context of the Scripture I am constrained to interpret them as I do, and I would not be loath to venture an interpretation of those passages.

DR. WILEY: But you really then are not supralapsarian? You are really 'sub' or 'infra'?

DR. NICOLE: That is correct. I am.

DR. WILEY: But I think you admit, though, that Calvin was supralapsarian?

DR. NICOLE: Well, I think there is a live issue at that point.

DR. WILEY: I have tended all the time to hold that Calvin was not supralapsarian. You don't put the decree to elect ahead of the decree to create?

DR. NICOLE: That is correct. I do not. I say, first the decree to create, second the decree to permit the fall, third, the decree to elect and reprove.

DR. WILEY: I know, that is the position of the Synod of Dort.

DR. NICOLE: The Synod of Dort, I think, encouraged infralapsarianism, however, without specifically condemning supralapsarianism. But then they did rebuke Maccovius, a very strong supralapsarian, and asked him to speak with the Scriptures rather than with Aristotle.

DR. HENRY: If the unchurched masses tonight were to overhear our discussion, they might weary of it and think it quite irrelevant to the crisis in contemporary life and thought. What is so urgent about this theological dispute that led to diverse theological traditions, to many feelings and divisions? To what does this discussion of election and predestination call the modern man in his searching of the religious problem?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, it seems to me—if you're thinking in terms of the masses—that the great things highlighted by this discussion are the helplessness of man without the grace of God, and the utter dependence of man for salvation, no matter who he is, upon God's saving action in Jesus Christ. That is brought to a head by this whole discussion, and I think is ultimately the real relevance of it quite apart from any particular conclusions reached in the immediate setting. For the more educated world, which in a sense constitutes an even bigger problem than the masses, it seems to me that the great lesson for a true knowledge of God, for a true salvation by God, is this helplessness of man, in the first instance, and this need for the sovereign operation of God from first to last, from his seeking us to save, from his working out of salvation in the substitutionary death of Christ, and also through to the application of the message of the Gospel by the Holy Spirit under the means of grace. Now, of course, the modern man wouldn't understand all this kind of terminology, but this is the lesson that we have to get across to him. And I think in this particular respect, classical Arminianism would not really be so far amiss as to the whole issue if it understood the task really in terms of getting this lesson in clear focus—although unfortunately it didn't agree on what focus it should be. The whole of our modern world, both the masses and the educated, are in precise need of this particular message.



DR. WILEY: Well, I'm entirely agreed that man is helpless in himself for salvation and can't be saved except by the grace of God from start to finish. When he believes in Christ, faith is not a substitute for righteousness; it is a means of appropriation, and all the merit accrues to Christ. Those that are brought into Christ are the elect in Christ. And I think, as far as talking about the rest of it, we are going back somewhat into the nature of God, and taking up a lot of things in which our difference is solely in terminology. But as long as we hold that man is depraved, man can't be saved except by the grace of God, and that grace by the drawing of Christ. We live by grace and by faith all the way through. And finally, we shall be translated by grace.

DR. NICOLE: I certainly agree with the other brethren that the helplessness of man is to be emphasized at this time. And that message, while not pleasant to hear, is certainly readily understood. Also it is very important to emphasize the adequacy of the plan of God in the work of grace, and at that point particularly I think all of us can agree. Now, with respect to relevancy, I think that many of these problems do concern people. Whenever you start talking about predestination you get a lively discussion in almost any group. You don't have to move with intellectuals to get an interest in that. In fact, it is relevant to philosophy, to other religions than the Christian one—the Moslem has almost as many discussions on this type of problem as we do. I cannot feel at all, when I discuss this matter, that I have estranged myself from the proper values of earthly existence. I feel, on the contrary, that this is very relevant. It is true that we must have a proper sense of reverence because we cannot delve curiously into the secrets of the Almighty. At the same time, this line of discussion is justified, is necessitated by the very conditions of our faith, and it presents vital issues that in some ways will form and fashion our proclamation of the gospel of Christ.

DR. HENRY: Can we locate one reason for the modern man's feeling that predestination is once again a relevant consideration in the naturalistic and behavioristic philosophies that suggested a certain fatalistic destiny for man? That communism, as it were, also suggests that we are "predestined" to a given future? Does this context of contemporary philosophical discussion really help men detect in the gospel of Christ by contrast, despite the judgment it pronounces upon him, some glimmer of hope not found in the despairing philosophies of the day?

DR. BROMILEY: Well, I think it may raise an interest, but the Christian theologian has very sharply to differentiate the Gospel of grace from any kind of determinism of a materialistic or scientific nature. I think it is a fatal temptation to try to use these, as a few people have done, to back up the Christian doctrine or even to make some kind of transition to it, just as there was once a fatal tendency, or at least the Lutherans thought so, and some of the Reformed, to appeal to Islam. Many Lutherans in the seventeenth century thought that Calvinists were secret Mohammedans—quite wrongly, of course. Some of them finished up as deists, however. And they were deterministic. It seems to me we must resist the temptation to use these kinds of determinism as a form of bridge for the modern mind. At the same time, they have no doubt stimulated the question to which we can reply with the true doctrine of ordination or determination in a Christian setting.

END

## WE QUOTE:

**DICKERING WITH DESPOTS:** "As authentic freemen we are under profound moral compulsions to seriously hold onto and defend our deepest convictions.

"When expediences sink things into desperation, further bargaining with evil only speeds up the decimating processes. Free world leadership in conferences with recreant influences—parleying with the Hitlers of history—is more than a pathetic spectacle. . . . The dickering processes give communism a chance, not only to bleed "propaganda advantages" out of the moral weaknesses of Western civilization, but to advertise these moral weaknesses to a watching and terribly frightened human world. A still yet more fearful thing is that it plays havoc with hope. The people under the heel of Brutitarianism grow sick at heart to see their slave masters respectfully consorted with by the representatives of the Free World. They know and we know and everybody knows that any agreement—no matter how solemnly signed—by such irresponsible faithlessness is completely worthless. "In its 40-year history the Soviet Union has executed over 2,000 agreements with non-communist governments" (Congressman Hosmer). None of them has been kept in good faith. . . .

"In the name of idealism the democracies go to the conferences hoping against hope that some humane considerations will prevail. With set and fixed intentions the communists go to the conferences to establish another position in the never ending use of "the big lie" to promote their grasp for world control. Here as always the deceptions about their methods are themselves a conniving and basic method for befuddling the people. This is why it sucks into its ranks of naive helpers so many men of good will. Conferences hoping to wheedle moral goodness out of such evils merely help degradation to play its ugly and terrible game.

"This era—of all eras—should not be blind. We refused to understand *Mein Kampf* and we paid dearly. Can we afford to repeat the failure with still yet more horrifying forces at work in the world? International conferences with those who are specialists in cynical irresponsibility may produce "double-talk" but they cannot produce moral greatness—and we need moral greatness, stubborn, unbending, unmitigated moral greatness. If ethical leadership in Western Civilization falls for the fiction it can buy peace by gambling with moral principles the future of humanity is dark. It is a fearful thing for the Free World to accept criminal rulers into respectable society endowing them with an undeserved prestige and standing. . . . Authentic morality bitterly condemns butchers and butcheries. It cannot sit down and listen to or sign treaties with the enemies of mankind.

"To give even a semblance of respectability or recognition to inhumane elements is to be an accomplice in the wickedness. The best of intentions do not change the reality of ruthless fact. The degradation which is now destroying the world's decency, reeling and drunk with its appetite for power, has, through the naivete of other people's childish hopes, already achieved a measure of international recognition, which, with sweeping fanfare will further the reaches of its conquests and in just that proportion will undercut the respect of enslaved millions for the moral character of the Free World. Those in bondage, walled off in the black hopelessness of the iron-curtain areas, cannot, I think, see and hear what has happened without monstrous misgivings."—Commander H. H. LIPPINCOTT, United States Navy (Retired).

# A LAYMAN and his Faith

## BABEL OR PENTECOST?

THE CONFLICT in the soul of man between Babel and Pentecost is an unending one. On the one hand there is the innate desire to launch out on the plane of self-determination, to be the captain of one's own soul. On the other there is the call to receive that which is supernatural in origin and supernatural in its effect, through the transforming work and power of the Holy Spirit.

¶ Humanism is tremendously appealing. What a lift to the ego to feel that we are capable of rising above our immediate limitations and of accomplishing great things for ourselves and for the world in which we live!

How humiliating to concede that within us there dwells no good thing; that this heart of ours is desperately wicked; that we stand guilty and condemned before a holy and just God; that our eternal destiny depends not one whit on anything which we can accomplish of ourselves.

The conflict of Eden has never ceased. To say that Eden never existed is but to deny that which we experience every day. Confronted with a "This is the way, walk ye in it", we are tempted to follow "the way which seemeth right to man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."

Aware of a need and a dilemma we are told to dip in the Jordan of a simple faith in the atoning work of Christ, but we turn to the more attractive rivers of man-made philosophies.

Zealous in a religiosity into which we were born, and for which we have worked for many years, we avoid the confrontation of the risen and living Christ because we want the beauty of His life without the implications of His death.

The philosophy of Babel is as current today as in the day when men banded together to save themselves through a tower of their own making. Not only are the non-Christian religions evidence of this unending conflict but any religion which predicates man's salvation on that which he can do for himself is but a reflection of those dramatic and tragic days on the plain of Shinar.

Although Babel is synonymous with confusion man still turns to the Babel of man-made ideas and away from divine revelation.

Although history reveals the end of those who defy God and refuse to believe His Word, the descendants of the tower builders are to be found on every hand: "Let us do this", "Let us do that" is heard across the world. But God is not mocked. He still comes down to confuse, confound and scatter the unbelieving.

¶ There is a dramatic antithesis between Babel and Pentecost.

Babel brings confusion of tongues and scattering of efforts. Pentecost brings a unity of expression in the Lord and an empowering to serve the Living God.

Babel was God's judgment on a rebellious people. Pentecost was a mighty blessing on a praying people.

Babel scattered men to the oblivion of futility. Pentecost scattered men to the ends of the earth with a message and with power.

Babel divided. Pentecost united.

From Babel came no blessing. From Pentecost there came men filled with the Spirit of the living God and empowered to win others to a like precious faith.

¶ The relevance of these philosophies to our own times is for all who will to see. Christ tells us, "For without me ye can do nothing", while Paul cries out in triumph, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."

Our Lord's illustration of the vine and the branches was no trite analogy. Only as the branches abide in the vine can they bear fruit. Detached from the vine they wither and die.

Humanism is predicated on the self-sufficiency of man. Christianity is predicated on the utter hopelessness of man.

To confront man with the love of God in Christ can inflate his ego. To confront him with his sinfulness and then with the love of God, which offers pardon and redemption through the atonement of His Son, places man in his right perspective: to his sinful self and to a holy and loving God. Only by facing the awfulness of sin and the tremendous price paid to redeem us from that sin can we rightly evaluate the cost and the implications of the Cross.

Babel minimizes sin, questions judgment, denies the eternal separation of the unrepentant sinner from God, while at the same time it by-passes the blood

of Calvary and expects Christ's "example of divine love" to spark within the heart of the unsaved the will and the power to become new creatures.

Babel looks on conversion as a process in which man has a part. Pentecost looks on conversion as a supernatural act.

Pentecost was a visible act of the sovereign grace of God whereby there was poured out on those who had humbled their minds and hearts the Third Person of the Trinity.

Wherever the Church, or individual Christians, attempt to do the Lord's work in the arm of flesh, their efforts are doomed. Dependence on the presence and power of the Holy Spirit is a grace to be cultivated and a practice to be pursued.

¶ The Pentecostal experience of the early Church should be the individual experience of the Christian today.

But the "old man" with his concepts is ever with us and before we know it we are erecting a 20th Century tower of Babel as an evidence of our own foolishness, a structure already destined to destruction.

Babel looks at the things which are seen; Pentecost fixes its eyes on the things which are not seen.

Babel has respect to the allurements and the values of the world; Pentecost looks to the city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

Babel tries to prove God. Pentecost simply trusts Him.

Babel lifts its head in rebellion against revealed truth and makes other plans and devises other ways. Pentecost bows its head in humility and accepts as fact those things which only the heart of faith can believe.

Babel is rationalism. Pentecost is faith. Babel is, "Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice?" Pentecost is, "Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief".

Babel rejects revelation. Pentecost rejoices in it.

The conflict of which we speak is so real, so prevalent and so persistent that every Christian should cry out in prayer for forgiveness and right perspective.

We need to ask God to deliver us from the thought that we, like the men of Babel, can stand unashamed in His presence, or in any way contribute to our redemption.

We need to experience the gracious work of Pentecost,—a divine visitation whereby the Spirit of the living God comes to dwell in our hearts.

L. NELSON BELL

# THE MISSION OF A MAGAZINE

With this issue *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* begins its fourth year of evangelical witness and ministry. Not only has *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* banded together an international, interdenominational scholarship dedicated to evangelical loyalties, but it is now widely recognized as the magazine with the largest circulation in the world to the Protestant ministry and lay leadership. As a venture in evangelical teamwork, we salute both our readers and our farflung staff of contributing editors and correspondents. Many influential coworkers in the mainstream of Protestant thought and life also have supplemented the magazine's sturdy emphasis on biblical evangelism, theology, and ethics.

During the current year *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* presentation luncheons or banquets have been held in Boston, New York, and Los Angeles, and others are soon to be held elsewhere. Speaking at the Los Angeles banquet Dr. Wilbur M. Smith, editor of *Peloubet's Notes on the International Sunday School Lessons*, and one of this magazine's 50 contributing editors, optimistically sketched the mission and ministry of the magazine in prophetic words: "There is no reason why, in the next two decades if the Lord tarries, *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* cannot be the most powerful single agent in this critical hour for the defense of the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel." Dr. Smith's larger comments in fact place upon all who share the opportunities of this enterprise a new and enlarging responsibility:

"Those of us who love Christ as Saviour and Lord hold three great truths which we must never compromise: 1. That there is a sovereign, omnipotent, holy and righteous God who created this world; 2. That he sent his only begotten Son, the Lord Jesus, to live and die and rise again that he might save men from sin and the wrath of God into salvation and eternal life; 3. That we have in the Bible a divinely inspired record that stands unique as the revelation of God.

"These great truths are finding enemies of increasing power in this epochal hour in which we live.

"The first is this fearful, brutal, bloody, godless thing called *communism*. One third of the population of this globe is under Communistic dominion. It is inevitable that the rest of the world and the Christian Church must increasingly deal with the satanic influence of 900 million people foresworn to atheism. We

will feel this more keenly in days to come. The next generation will have a battle on its hands exceeding anything the world has yet experienced.

"The second is a power that is indifferent to our faith, swallowing up so many of our younger generation. I refer to *naturalism*. As the president of Princeton said in a recent message, 'The explosion [I like that word] of knowledge which the past half century has brought about in science is obviously and inescapably a very important matter.' Think what enormous areas have opened up for the first time since some of us were born: aeronautics, atomic energy, nuclear fission, the whole science of genetics, and now space exploration. But the tragedy is that 95 per cent of the leading scientists of the Western world are without the Lord Jesus Christ. Science is indifferent to our faith. We live in its atmosphere, and it is bound to have an effect upon our younger people.

"The third enemy is within the Church: this subtle, gnawing thing called *liberalism*.

"These three things: the animosity of communism, the indifference of naturalism, and the undermining of faith by liberalism, are enemies which must be faced if we are to do what the Apostle Paul describes in *Philippians* as engaging in the *advance* of the faith. The word *prokopto* means 'to cut your way through,' as through a great forest, to reach the enemy. The *furtherance* of the Gospel! That is what you and I are interested in; not only in the defense of the faith against its enemies, but in the *furtherance* of the faith and the winning of multitudes for the Lord Jesus Christ.

"The Christian Church has many agencies available for the defense of the faith and for the furtherance of the Gospel. I simply name some: The church and its pulpit, although it is not always in defense of the faith and the furtherance of the Gospel. Ecclesiastical pronouncements, some good and some bad. Evangelism. Alongside these stand the great missionary organizations, like the American Bible Society and the British and Foreign Bible Society; the independent youth movements such as Inter-Varsity, Young Life, Campus Crusade, and Christian Endeavor; the institutions devoted to Christian education; Christian colleges, Bible institutes, sound theological seminaries; Christian books and other literature; Christian radio and television programs; and religious periodicals.

"Spurgeon said (and he should have known because he could preach with power) that in his mind a re-



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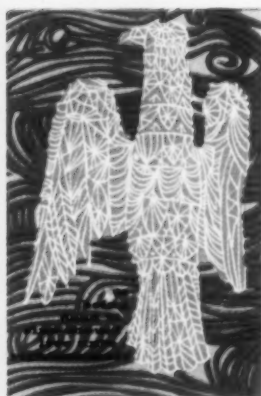
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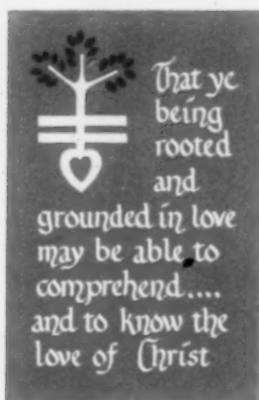
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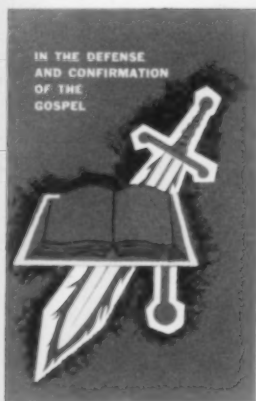
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religious periodical devoted to the Christian faith could do more for the cause of Christ than any other one agency ordained of God on this earth. We are upon sad times in this sphere of religious periodicals. We have somehow come into a desert. We have about 1,100 religious periodicals in this country. They have a paid subscription list of about 15 million, very few with over 100,000. We have not had for a quarter of a century in this country a great, powerful, well-informed evangelical periodical that can meet the intellectual problems that are confronting intelligent men and women today—a resource in which they can have confidence, that can speak with authority. And we are desperately in need of it.

"I can say some things about CHRISTIANITY TODAY that I would not be able to say about any other religious journal in this country. It is important that the Editor be able to gather around him some of the leaders of evangelical thoughts on both sides of the Atlantic. If I know anything about the history of religious journalism, the list of 50 contributing editors of CHRISTIANITY TODAY has been unmatched by any religious journal in America. This achievement is in itself a guarantee of excellence and high attainment."

The passing year has etched its sorrows and its joys upon the list of our dedicated associates: the removal by sudden death of correspondent Dr. T. Leonard Lewis, erstwhile president of Gordon College and Divinity School, and the happy addition as contributing editors of Dean S. Barton Babbage in Australia and Dr. Kenneth Strachan in Latin America.

During our fourth publication year, the popular "Review of Current Religious Thought" will be contributed in sequence by Dr. Addison H. Leitch, Dr. Philip E. Hughes, Dr. Frank E. Gaebelein, and Dr. G. C. Berkouwer. All are gifted and discerning interpreters of contemporary theological and social trends, and their contributions may be counted upon to carry forward the high merit of this fortnightly feature.

In an era of unparalleled problems and opportunities CHRISTIANITY TODAY will continue to minister to the life of the Church, believing that the historic evangelical faith has a vital message for the times. Theological liberalism has failed to meet the moral and spiritual needs of mankind. All too frequently it finds itself adrift in speculation and dissonance which neither solves the problem of the individual nor of the society of which he is a part. Sound theological doctrine, biblical preaching, and evangelism find renewed emphasis in our columns, and there is eager and wide acceptance throughout the churches. True ecumenicity

is fostered by setting forth the New Testament teaching of the unity of believers in Jesus Christ and the spiritual oneness engendered by the Holy Spirit. Beyond the Church we believe that the basic needs of the social order must meet their solution first in the redemption of the individual; that the Church and the individual have a vital responsibility to be both salt and light in a decaying and darkening world.

Concurrent with our anniversary is the observance of Protestant Press Month in America. CHRISTIANITY TODAY is happy that, along with its colleagues of the religious press, it has been able to reflect to the world a more balanced view of American life and the American vision. Beyond doubt, the original sense of national purpose and destiny has now worn thin, and in some respects it has even been frayed somewhat by the lust for material things and repatched by social changers addicted to welfare statism.

The people of the world who sample American literature in the bookstalls of airports and rail stations around the world are likely to get a blurred focus on the American ideal. "... If we are not careful and very, very selective," cautions Carolyn Berntsen in *The Australian Quarterly* (June, 1959), "we may find ourselves envisioning the United States as a nation of psychopaths, sex-fiends, bored suburbanites, and juvenile delinquents. Violence, frustration, hysteria and ... decay seem to be the melodies played over and over in the contemporary American novel." The essayist urges Australian readers not to sketch the American outlook from current works "in the modern mood of earthly, cynical, often sordid realism, and written for the present commercial market which more often than not requires sex, sin, and cynicism as prerequisite to publication."

The Protestant press is doing its part to maintain the moral and spiritual heritage of "this nation under God." The evangelical dedication of many of our early colonies survives at grass roots in the spiritual life of the nation, and although not now vitally manifested in the cultural realm, it is nonetheless being renewed and deepened by the evangelistic tide of our time. This heritage must be renewed and strengthened if national debacle is to be thwarted. We join with our fellow craftsmen in a renewed dedication to the task. **END**

### EISENHOWER, KHRUSHCHEV AND HISTORY'S INEVITABLE COURSE

Now that President Eisenhower and Premier Khrushchev have had their exchange about the sure course of modern history, some further word about its inevitabilities may be appropriate. The modern debate is not reducible simply to the options of the triumph of Marxist socialism (based on the supposition of economic determinism) nor the triumph of free enterprise

(on the supposition of the inherent superiority of the philosophy of individual worth and personal liberty). The serious discussion of divine predestination and election featured elsewhere in this issue of *CHRISTIANITY TODAY* is not without vital implications for the discussion of the ultimate destiny of the human race and of the inevitabilities of history.

The notion that communism *must* supplant capitalism is, of course, nothing but the fanciful notion of the inevitability of progress now misappropriated as a coverall for dictatorial despotism. Neither the final nor the temporary triumph of communism is inherently assured. Its fundamental contradiction of family instincts, of man's natural desire for private property, and for freedom of religion, works against its spontaneous extension. Its effective survival, in fact, depends upon support by violence and barbarian power.

Mr. Khrushchev's farewell address was a colossal propaganda sally for communism. By oblique appeals to the Bible and to the example of Christ, the self-professed atheist perversely asked religious people to recognize the socialist system as "most humane and just" vis-a-vis capitalism. Elsewhere he suggested that the Christian teachings of brotherly love and forgiveness imply a socialist world order. Whoever has read Hobbes' *Leviathan* will recall how readily materialists can misuse holy things for corrupt ends.

Champions of the free world need not reach far into fact to unmask in the Premier's argument (that Soviet society is best, its internal relations good and brotherly) many verbal distortions: that in Soviet society the people enjoy full freedom; that freedom of religious belief prevails; that Soviet government is democratic; that private ownership means exploitation of the worker.

Compromise in the free world commitment is patent, conspicuously its concessions to socialist philosophy and its basic revolt against biblical theology and ethics that deteriorates liberty to license. Khrushchev's dramatic exploitation of these weaknesses lent force to criticism that his visit brought dignity to a dictator. (See remarks by Commander H. H. Lippincott in *We Quote*, page 18, this issue.) The economic virtues of free enterprise have been compromised in our era by expanding state controls and mounting taxation. Fortunately, American uneasiness increases over welfare state programs contradictory of free enterprise. Yet vote-hungry politicians approve many programs which, while not contradictory of free enterprise, nonetheless weaken it. Inflation is being slowed, but little determination exists to curtail nondefense spending and to reduce the national debt in order actually to halt erosion of the dollar. Meanwhile, Americans become less and less coherent in articulating a consistent alternative to socialism. Their confusion is in part due to ecclesiastical compoundings of Marxism and Christianity. Free men

must understand why free enterprise allows scope for individual rights and guards human persons from enslavement to government, and why revealed religion is the fount of human rights and duties, or they will soon squander their birthright.

Mr. K. emerged as international crusader for peace and disarmament. When faced by specific questions, he became evasive or abusive. He got his Big Two "summit" conference without progress at Geneva level. The West must range itself sincerely and aggressively on the side of peace rather than war in testing his proposals, and it can do so significantly only by giving international meaning to the concept of justice.

Some observers note three significant Khrushchev "changes": his recognition of the unity of the American people with government policy; his admission that war can be averted without economic crisis; and his implicit concession (in proposing peaceful coexistence and competition) that capitalism is not evil. Yet Khrushchev clearly values only what is "useful" [favorable to the ultimate triumph of communism]. He does not repudiate the Marxian world revolution as heresy, but asks only for decreased tensions. Can Soviet "peaceful competition" in this context be anything but a propaganda interlude on the roadway to Communist hegemony—an interlude made tolerable only by the notion that the Communist system is still in transit to the final stage?

Mr. K. voiced his United Nations peace plea the same month that the National Council of Churches moved ahead its Cleveland World Order Conference peace education plan. Both call for U.S. recognition and U.N. admission of Red China, for cessation of atomic tests, for disarmament. Khrushchev shares the indifference to Christian evangelism and missions, disinterest in supernatural regeneration, and preoccupation with socio-political matters of some churchmen given to peace promotion. American churchgoers await clarification of what Khrushchev said that ecumenists repudiate, and what ecumenists say that Khrushchev rejects. What relation exists between the propagation of the Christian religion, and its extension in society, and peace in our times? What awareness survives that Christianity's trumpet of peace to the world must distinctly sound the Saviour's name: "... My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you" (John 14:27)? Where is the sense of divine providence that once shaped America strong in spirit, dedicated to fulfillment of God's will? Where is the conviction of American destiny, sharing with the world the bold witness of faith in the Redeemer? Where is the warning that pagan nations are maneuvering to inherit a kingdom that God has already pledged to his Son Jesus Christ? Or is America, and American churchianity too, adrift in the world current of pagan aspirations? **END**



# EUTYCHUS and his kin

## ON EUTYCHUS

This hasty note is past your deadline because I fell asleep while composing a letter of congratulation on the beginning of your fourth year of publication. I was reassured to read recently that chronic sleepiness can be inherited. Perhaps I share a congenital affliction with my ancient namesake at Troas.

May I suggest an article someday on the original Eutychus? Preachers, at least, should know how to spell and pronounce his name (Yew'-ti-cuss—Ed.). The name meant "good luck" in an age when Lady Luck was even more fervently worshiped than at our race tracks.

Do you suppose anyone reflected on the name when Paul's prolonged discourse was interrupted by the abrupt disappearance of "Lucky" from the window sill? Was anyone shaken by a sudden thought that the goddess Tyche was revenged on an apostate from an old cult?

At any rate, the First Church of Troas, without the benefit of centuries of jokes about sleeping in church, no doubt failed to see anything comical in the still form on the dark street. Yet their joy must have been the richer when Eutychus was restored. The gates of death could not prevail against the church of Christ. The bondage of "good luck" was broken by the Good News.

Too many Christians still live with crossed fingers, sweating out their good luck as a portent of calamity. To see them you would never guess that God's good pleasure and not the goddess of Fate rules human destiny.

No doubt Eutychus should have been listening and praying rather than sleeping, but childlike faith and deep sleep are not unconnected. Tyche's devotees are great insomniacs; they must keep one eye on their capricious goddess. The psalmist, on the other hand, said, "In peace will I both lay me down and sleep" for the Lord who never slumbers was his Keeper.

At least Eutychus didn't need a sleeping pill.

EUTYCHUS

## INTO THE OPEN

We enjoyed Dr. Blake's article (Aug. 3 issue), and I am sure everyone who sees what is taking place appreciates your

courage and his in bringing it out into the open.

Whittier, Calif.

NORA COLLINS

The real essence of Mr. Blake's article . . . is that the character of our churches has so changed and will continue to change, as to make untenable the tax relationship now existing between Church and State. Christ recognized the same characteristics in the religion of his day and plainly indicated that it was reflected in a Church no longer of God, but a synagogue of Satan. Our course should not be directed toward changes in taxation but toward obedience to Christ's command that his house not be made a house of merchandise and a den of thieves.

WAYNE ANDERSON

Shannon City, Iowa

He has either forgotten that the power to tax is the power to destroy, or that may be what he remembers. If his suggestion were to be followed the next would be to eliminate gifts to churches from income tax exemptions. The church (his kind, that is) would then be almost entirely dependent on the state and the reunion would then be complete.

Wouldn't it be grand if clergy would attend to spiritual matters and leave economics and politics to us sinful laymen.

W. H. EVERETT

And shall the government also—just to be fair—reconsider . . . the tax-exempt status of secularistic "science"-aiding foundations all the way from Ford-Rockefeller-Carnegie . . . to little humanist foundations—all of which . . . (or nearly all) use at least part of every dollar to destroy Christ and promote antichrist.

L. V. CLEVELAND

Westminster Church (Congregational)  
Canterbury, Conn.

I think Dr. Blake's article perceptive and courageous.

Chicago, Ill.

JOSEPH A. STEINER

With Carnell writing for *The Century* and Blake writing for *CHRISTIANITY TODAY*, the day of ecumenicity has arrived!!

FRANK LAWRENCE

Graystone United Presbyterian Church  
Indiana, Pa.

## YES, IT DOES

In your report of the Oberlin synod of the merging United Church of Christ you state that the Congregational Churches in a previous merger, united with some churches of the Disciples of Christ to become the Congregational Christian Churches (Aug. 3 issue).

This is a rather common misconception due to the varied nomenclature used by the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). There were two movements in America in the early 1800's which emphasized Christian unity, taking the Bible and the Bible alone as a rule of faith and practice. In Kentucky, Tennessee, southern Ohio, Indiana and Illinois one movement under Barton W. Stone was known as "Christian Church." In Virginia, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Kentucky the other movement under Thomas and Alexander Campbell was designated "Disciples of Christ." In 1831 these groups united and became widely known as "Christian Churches."

Some churches of the Stone movement refused to give up their original doctrines and their fellowship with similar Christian Church groups on the Eastern Seaboard with the result that a small denomination known as "The Christian Connection" was set up with headquarters at Dayton, Ohio. This is the body that united with the Congregationalists in 1931.

Does this help to keep the record straight?

JOSEPH DAMPIER

Milligan College, Tenn.

What is of greater validity, our doctrines and polity or our oneness in him who is Lord, even Jesus Christ? I do not presume to suggest that our doctrine and polity should be passed over lightly, for we recognize the part played by tradition in our fellowship, yet I believe that the Holy Spirit somehow draws us together into this merger. . . . I challenge you to find what God would do in this coming together of our two churches.

RICHARD E. SIMONSON

Trinity United Church of Christ  
(Evangelical and Reformed)  
Louisville, Ky.

The article . . . is very revealing. The

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## THE CROSS ON THE MOUNTAIN

by

SHERWOOD ELIOT WIRT

merger seems to be running into rougher and rougher weather. And I suspect there will be many "whitecaps" when the merger lawsuit comes to trial. . . .  
Chicago, Ill.

HOWELL D. DAVIES

I realize full well that we will never have one great, all-embracing, monolithic church. Such a development would be far from desirable. However, many of us do recognize that our present division into multifarious denominations is the scandal of Christendom. When mergers take place like the present one . . . , then it is an occasion for rejoicing.

RODERIC W. HURLBURT

The Congregational Church  
Gorham, N. H.

Betrays . . . utter lack of objectivity. . . .  
Minersville, Pa.

A. W. KOVACS

I have read the account . . . with great interest. . . . I was there throughout the sessions and took very careful notes myself, and I find that your reporter did an amazingly accurate job in telling what went on. . . . As much as your reporter included [on] . . . the points at which there seemed to be friction between denominational officials . . . was evident from what I observed and much more might be said about serious differences of opinion.

Chicago, Ill.

MALCOLM K. BURTON

I have . . . appreciated your most fair reporting of conventions of my own denomination, the troubles of my own seminary at Louisville, Ky. (Southern Baptist), and on that basis assume the news of other denominational meetings to be fairly reported. To be fair in these things is not easy, we know.

"Eutychus and his kin" is worth much; to see the reactions of the brethren is often informative as well as amusing.

First Baptist

JAMES A. ADAMS

Salisbury, Mo.

## AS A WAYWARD CHILD

In his report on the North American Christian Convention (July 20 issue), J. D. Murch has given an excellent thumbnail sketch of our brotherhood of churches (known as Disciples of Christ). . . . When diversity of opinion includes questioning the authority of Christ, and distortion of the New Testament pattern, then charity ceases to be a virtue and becomes betrayal of "contention for the faith once delivered to the saints." This is the unhappy situation in our brotherhood today. As in the case of a way-

ward child who leaves his father's house to pursue his own wilful way, the only course left to faithful members of the family is to remain true and pray for the eventual return of the prodigal. Following the usual pattern in such cases, it is the "stand-patters" who are named as the cause of division. God will be the final judge of that, and he has warned that his followers shall have no fellowship with unbelief.

It may be a little difficult for our denominational friends to understand how a body of believers can operate without a creed or discipline. The truth is, we do have both of these, but neither written by men. Our creed is Christ, and the life he lived on earth. Therefore it cannot be revised. Our discipline is found in the Word of God, given by inspiration to chosen men, who recorded it for the use of Christians, through all of time. . . .

Louisville, Ohio

VALDA H. PUGH

## TROUBLE IN KERALA

Your magazine has been appreciated partly because I do not come from the typical liberal Protestant atmosphere of English Congregationalism. I grew up in a Gospel Mission which developed from the Sankey and Moody evangelistic campaigns. . . . I have felt often the shallowness of much Congregational thought. Your magazine brings the old atmosphere of boyhood days back.

. . . We [have] had our minds busy with the violent upsurge against the Communist Ministry in Kerala. Like the Roman Catholics (strong here since the days of Xavier) we refused to accept the Kerala Education Act, which would have reduced our control over our schools to deciding when to attend to petty repairs. The Roman Catholics offered to send men to guard our school buildings against Communist-inspired parents and (some) teachers who might break them open, defying us, and carry on the schools. . . . Communist attacks on the Christian Church produce strange bedfellows!

G. W. TROWELL

Trivandrum, Kerala, India

## RAGING CHARIOTS

No . . . apology from John H. Gerstner was required for . . . warning against breaking auto speed laws (Aug. 3 issue). . . . I wonder whether he has ever preached on it from Nahum 2:4: "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways: they shall seem like torches, they shall run like the lightnings." Patterson, Calif. WILBUR L. CASWELL

# Christendom's Key Issue: 25 Scholars' Views



**BARTH**  
"atom warfare"



**BERKOUWER**  
"new attention"



**BLACKWOOD**  
"God in the forefront"



**BRUCE**  
"to be real Christians"

What is the most vital issue facing contemporary Christianity?

Twenty-five leading scholars responded to this query posed by CHRISTIANITY TODAY.

Some noted scholars, among them Professor REINHOLD NIEBUHR of Union Theological Seminary, New York, and Professor PAUL TILlich of Harvard Divinity School, confessed their inability to narrow the issues to a single primary concern.

"I don't know how to choose one vital issue among the many issues that face the Christian Church," said Niebuhr.

Tillich said: "I feel it is impossible to reduce to one most vital issue the problems facing contemporary Christianity."

KARL BARTH, professor, University of Basel: "How do you explain the fact that the large Christian bodies cannot pronounce a definite yes or no on the matter of atom warfare? What significance has this fact: (a) in regard to the Church's own message; (b) in regard to the world around her (the Church)?"

G. C. BERKOUWER, professor, Free University of Amsterdam, Netherlands:



## CHRISTIANITY TODAY NEWS

"I see the 'most vital issue' herein: That amid all kinds of evidences of secularization and antagonism toward the Christian faith, we nevertheless discover once again in the Church a new sense of the importance of the Gospel and a realization that God's Word is manifesting itself with power and is calling for renewed attention (II Timothy 2:9, 'the word of God is not bound'). That gives us courage for the future, when men through the overpowering influence of the Gospel meet each other in new perspective, full of comfort and mission in this disturbed world. In one word—new attention to the Bible."

ANDREW W. BLACKWOOD, professor emeritus, Princeton Theological Seminary: "How to put God in the forefront of Christianity today, and then keep him foremost. Call the current tendency secularism, externalism, humanism, or what not; really it is pride and selfishness. In hymns and prayers, sermons and religious books, we exalt 'Man'—ourselves—rather

than the Triune God. We need a new Christ-centered Reformation."

F. F. BRUCE, professor, Manchester University: "Most vital is the urgent necessity for all who profess and call themselves Christians, in West and East alike, to be *real* Christians, wholeheartedly committed to the cause of Christ in the world and ready to embrace the conditions which he laid down for those who wished to be his disciples."

EMILE CAILLIET, professor, Princeton Theological Seminary: "The most vital issue is that we have lost a sense of cosmic purpose secured over the ages, thanks mostly to the Gospel. We are accordingly overwhelmed by a mood of futility to the point of reverting to the very forms of doom which characterized the pagan past."

EDWARD JOHN CARNELL, professor, Fuller Theological Seminary: "The most vital issue is the communion of the saints. Jesus prayed that his disciples would be so knit by cords of love, that when the

**CAILLIET**  
"overwhelmed by a mood"



**CARNELL**  
"communion of the saints"



**CLARK**  
"neglect and repudiation"



**GAEBELEIN**  
"fuller realization"





**GERSTNER***"definition of Christianity"***HUNT***"idolatrous worship"***JELLEMA***"the secularism"***KUHN***"a two-fold issue"*

world saw the Church it would see the very unity of God. Dissension is an offense against Christ and the Gospel."

GORDON H. CLARK, professor, Butler University: "The source and cause of all other issues facing contemporary Christianity is the neglect and repudiation of the Scriptures. If there is no intelligible, written revelation, then all opinions are superstitions. On the other hand, if God has given us information and commands, we should accept and obey without addition or subtraction."

FRANK E. GAEBELEIN, headmaster, The Stony Brook School: "The most vital need is for a deeper and fuller realization of the unchanging relevance of Jesus Christ, who is 'the same yesterday, and today, and forever.' No scientific advance or political upheaval can alter the fact that God's sovereign will is being done in Christ. Throughout the world today many have lost their sense of purpose. Only a Christianity rooted and grounded in the eternal adequacy of the living Christ is sufficient to bring men to a recovery of purpose."

JOHN H. GERSTNER, professor, Pittsburgh-Xenia Theological Seminary: "The most vital question facing Christianity is Christianity—that is, the definition of

Christianity. There is so great difference in this area that it is inconceivable that all who use the name are speaking about the same thing. Wisdom is (eternal) bliss; 'tis (eternal) folly to be ignorant."

CARL F. H. HENRY, Editor, CHRISTIANITY TODAY: "Rightly to evaluate the modern man's rebellion against God (without underestimating communism and yet without ignoring the secularism of the West), and to challenge this revolt both authentically and courageously where God has spoken, and with his weapons, rather than by human schemes and skills—that is the really Big Task."

W. BOYD HUNT, professor, Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary: "The tragic proportion of inactive church members, the maladjustment of the races in Christian societies, and communism's seeming superiority to Christianity in devotion to some virtues, show that ultimately the most vital issue facing contemporary Christianity is whether or not it can recognize its idolatrous worship of man-made orthodoxies and ideals and submit afresh to the revolutionizing lordship of Jesus Christ."

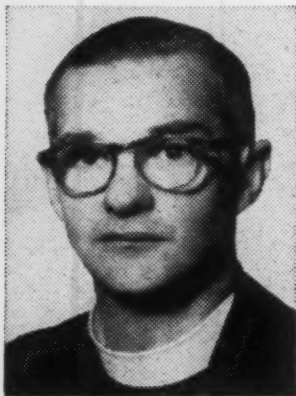
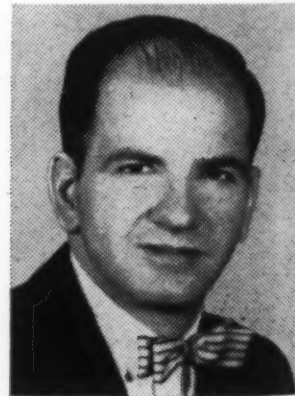
W. HARRY JELLEMA, professor, Calvin College: "Not any one of the various issues as such is nearly so vital as the

subtle, pervasive, self-righteous secularism, which patterns the modern mind—the mind with which we (also we Christians) frame the issues and our solutions, the mind with which we would think and secularize even our Christianity."

HAROLD B. KUHN, professor, Asbury Theological Seminary: "A world divided and deeply confused challenges contemporary Christianity to meet a two-fold issue: she must keep her inner witness clear; and—refusing to speak in areas in which she lacks competence—she must raise her voice concerning external issues in such a manner as to keep abiding moral principles in the sharp foreground."

LEON MORRIS, vice principal of Ridley College: "The Church's vital problem is that of communication. The Gospel is not seriously weighed: it is simply ignored by active opponents, by the indifferent, and by nominal adherents alike. The Church's problem is how to stab men awake to their plight as sinners and to their need of the Saviour."

J. THEODORE MUELLER, professor, Concordia Seminary: "To me the most vital issue faces us in the words: 'O earth, earth, earth, hear the word of the Lord' (Jer. 22:29). At the bottom of Judah's spiritual, social and political

**MORRIS***"of communication"***MUELLER***"the people's contempt"***NIEBUHR***"I don't know"***RAMM***"forces which divide"*



**REID**  
"being relevant"



**ROBINSON**  
"proclamation of God"



**SASSE**  
"decline of religion"



**STEWART**  
"evangelism"

troubles lay the people's contempt for the divine Word. Similarly the troubles of our own time stem in the main from neglect of the divine Word in the home, the state, and the Church. Unless the divine message of sin and grace, repentance and faith will be heard we shall escape God's just punishment no less than Judah escaped it. The path that leads to the world's welfare is the path that leads to God in Christ Jesus. The Church today dare not become like that of Laodicea."

**BERNARD RAMM**, professor, California Baptist Theological Seminary: "The most important issue facing Christendom is the strength of those forces which divide evangelical Christians, and the weakness of those forces which make for real evangelical union. Doctrinaire positions and 'party line' theology must undergo serious criticism from the light of Scripture and with the Holy Spirit's help."

**W. STANFORD REID**, professor, McGill University: "The most vital issue facing Christianity? I think that it is the necessity of being relevant to the world of the mid-twentieth century. There is a great danger that our Christianity may be expressed in the language and thought forms of the nineteenth or even an earlier

century. But a greater danger still is that we do not relate it to the contemporary problems of both the individual and society as a whole. If we do not speak with relevance, we speak in a vacuum."

**WILLIAM C. ROBINSON**, professor, Columbia Theological Seminary: "The most vital need facing contemporary Christianity is the proclamation of God in his objective reality. This will issue in the recognition of God as the Creator with all authority in heaven and on earth. It will mean the acceptance of the Ten Words as his commandments which are objectively over man and may not be twisted to fit our subjective fancies. It will bring a new sense of sin and guilt and create a hunger for righteousness which only the Gospel can fill. It will focus our trust not on our response, decision or psychological faith, but on what God has graciously done for us in Christ, that is, in his death for our sins and in his resurrection for our justification."

**HERMAN SASSE**, professor, United Evangelical Lutheran Church seminary (Australia): "The most disturbing issue is the general decline of religion in modern mankind. Political doctrines and emotions have become the substitute for religion, and religions the tool of politics."

As this applies also to Christianity as a religion, our main concern must be to preserve that which does not belong to the sphere of human religion and by which the Church of Christ lives: the objective Word of God and the sacraments instituted by Christ.

**JAMES S. STEWART**, professor, University of Edinburgh: "The most vital issue facing contemporary Christianity is evangelism. And that in two dimensions. (1) *Within the Church*. Men and women have to be helped to believe their own faith and to realize their riches in Christ. (2) *Outside the Church*. Here evangelism means a fellowship of reconciled and forgiven sinners feeling a personal responsibility and concern to make real by word and deed to all men the reconciliation and forgiveness of God."

**MERRILL C. TENNEY**, dean, Graduate School, Wheaton College: "Is Christianity a supernatural revelation abroad or merely a popular feeling? Is it a transforming experience, or is it only a subject of theological debate? We need a fresh manifestation of the Holy Spirit to renew the true unity, logic, and dynamic of Christian faith."

**CORNELIUS VAN TIL**, professor, Westminster Theological (Cont'd on page 37)



**TENNEY**  
"fresh manifestation"



**TILlich**  
"it is impossible"



**VAN TIL**  
"critique"



**WEIGEL**  
"to communicate"



## DID KHRUSHCHEV SEE AMERICA?

Minutes after his silvery TU-114 appeared on the blue Maryland horizon, Khrushchev—one of the most celebrated international visitors since the Queen of Sheba—was reflecting his high priority for economics.

"I will be glad to talk with statesmen, representatives of the business

SPECIAL  
REPORT

world, intellectuals, workers and farmers, and to become familiar with the life of the industrious and enterprising American people," said Khrushchev in response to President Eisenhower's initial welcome at Andrews Air Force Base.

"It is true that you are richer than we are at present," the Red leader told a state dinner in the White House the same evening. "But then tomorrow we will be as rich as you are, and the day after tomorrow we will be even richer."

The next 12 days bore out clearly what his first utterances hinted at: that Khrushchev was toeing the Marxist line which merges the dialectic with economic determinism as the comprehensive key to reality.

Preoccupation with economics characterized Khrushchev's entire tour of the United States. Absorption in material things shaped an itinerary, moreover, which raises the question whether he really saw a true cross-section of America.

Khrushchev viewed little during his stay that was distinctively Christian or that would underscore America's great spiritual heritage. This turn of events could be attributed largely to Khrushchev himself. U. S. State Department spokesmen said the course of the tour depended to a great extent upon decisions of the little man whose country had just placed its coat of arms upon the moon.

It was left to Eisenhower to salvage something for the cause of Christian witness, and many clergymen feel his deeds on the final day of Khrushchev's stay represented the most devout gesture during his entire term of office. Eisenhower not only broke into top-level talks with Khrushchev to attend a Sunday morning worship service, but invited the Red leader to accompany him. Khrushchev declined, explaining that an acceptance would shock the Russian people. But the impact of the President's spiritual priorities was firmly registered.

"I am personally an atheist," Khrushchev had said earlier in Los Angeles. Yet nobody could deny his religion-like devotion to Red materialism. His natural

religious inclinations seem diverted wholly to the thesis that man's basic need is economic, and it was precisely this concern which dominated his interest in America.

Business leaders made up the large bulk of his private dinner guests throughout the trip. In New York it was the Economic Club which got to sponsor a banquet for him. In Washington it was the *Journal of Commerce*.

Economic interests vitalized many of Khrushchev's U. S. speeches, too. In his oft-repeated *mirnoe soshuschestvovanie*—peaceful coexistence—the trade angle was prominent. Even when he spoke of disarmament, the Soviet chief revealed that he was thinking of its significance in channeling Soviet defense funds to consumer goods. He remarked publicly in San Jose, California, that the most amiable contacts of his U. S. tour were with business leaders.

The economic overtones were evident despite Khrushchev's insistence that he had not come here to beg. "Trade is like a barometer," he said in New York. "It shows the direction of the development of policy."

One of the more surprising aspects of Khrushchev's approach was his use of references to deity. He used far more Christian expressions than he heard from Americans. The fact that this practice contradicted his professed atheism illustrates his willingness to brush aside logic for convenience.

Clergy reaction to Khrushchev's pious pronouncements dismissed them as (1) a tactic to establish common ground, and (2) Russian expressions which no longer imply belief in their truthfulness.

Perhaps the most important aspect of the visit—widely ignored—was its effect upon the masses who live under Communist domination against their will. Were they losing hope? Reliable reports of reaction were scarce.

Some observers feel that discontent in Iron Curtain countries is diminishing in view of Communist technological improvements. There is speculation that space conquests have stirred national pride to the extent that the government has picked up more respect from the populace.

There were sound arguments, however, for the opposite view. In testimony before the House Committee on Un-American Activities, the Khrushchev visit was characterized as a "terrific victory for communism."

"It amounts to a body blow to the

morale of resistance in the Communist world," said Eugene Lyons, a senior editor of the *Reader's Digest* and former correspondent to Russia who has written a biography of Khrushchev. "It's a betrayal of the hopes of the enemies of communism within that world, and their numbers can be counted by the hundred million."

Whatever the merits of his visit, many U. S. Christians seized the opportunity to promote special prayers for Khrushchev. And who can say, they will ask, that the Holy Spirit did not deal with his heart?

Some quarters nonetheless lamented the fact that, in the framework of his own preferences, the influences of American Judeo-Christian tradition were not presented in a more favorable light.

Most distressing was the episode at 20th Century Fox studios, where the Khrushchev party was exposed to three "Can-Can" scenes, featuring a wild dance with suggestive skirt-flipping climaxed when a male runs off with a leading lady's bloomers.

The Russians were detained at the studios beyond time allotted while movie producers, eager for expanded markets, were making their impression. The bid backfired.

"We don't want our people to see that kind of trash," Khrushchev was reported to have remarked later. He publicly referred to the dance as "immoral" and called it a form of pornography. The development had played into his hands and Khrushchev had come out as the apparent champion of a high morality.

In a private audience with seven top labor leaders the following evening in San Francisco, Khrushchev was said to have mimicked the dancers by stooping over and flipping his coat tails.

The labor consultation itself deteriorated into what (Cont'd on page 35)

## The Press Corps

David E. Kucharsky, News Editor of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, was the only representative of the religious press to accompany Khrushchev on his U. S. tour.

To cover this significant visit for CHRISTIANITY TODAY readers, Kucharsky joined a press corps of some 250 in traveling with Khrushchev. The correspondents, officially accredited by the U. S. State Department, came from many parts of the world. Among them were 21 newsmen from Communist lands.



**America is not big enough**—no community in America is big enough—for Protestants who hate Roman Catholics and Roman Catholics who hate Protestants. Hatred and prejudice directed against another human being is a sin against God, a satanic device that has warped and embittered every society that has ever harbored them.

**Christ's Mission** joins with all true American Christians—Protestant and Catholic—in combating this evil wherever and however it rears its ugly head.

**Hatred is born of fear**; prejudice is the offspring of ignorance. Enlightenment helps to break down prejudice whereas fear can only be dispelled by removing its root causes. Little can be done to relieve the basic tensions between Protestants and Roman Catholics while each group suspects the other of designs to advance its cause at the expense of the welfare of the other. Protestants usually have taken and will continue to take the initiative in destroying these corrosive tensions which are threatening the life of our democratic society.

# HATE?

**In areas where protest must be registered**—and there are such areas—Protestants should protest not against personalities but against false theological principles which, if universally accepted, would undermine our precious freedoms of speech, assembly, and worship. But the

Protestant voice must also be heard distinctly in the preaching of the Word of the Gospel. Ours is a missionary imperative; we are witnesses for Christ.

**This is the course of love**, and the only course that can succeed in overcoming prejudice and hate. If our Protestant testimony is a demonstration of the Life of Love, then there is still hope that our nation can be spared the reign of terror and persecution that has sullied the recent history of Spain and Colombia.

**The way out of religious tyranny** is not "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth." God has given Protestants light and liberty from superstition and idolatry. This light and liberty will be preserved only if they are shared. But it is impossible for us to share them unless we first abandon, wholeheartedly and without reservation, all prejudice and hate, and in deep humility pray for our friends and neighbors.

**1960 may prove** to be a year of opportunity for Protestants. A Catholic candidate for the presidency is a possibility. Opposition to such a candidacy may stem from sober recognition of the problems involved, or from other reasons; but hate will not be one of them. Join, therefore, the many Protestants who are actively witnessing to Roman Catholics through the ministry of Christ's Mission. We cordially solicit your prayers and fellowship. Write today for brochure on the first of our Christian Heritage Series of correspondence courses titled "Roman Catholic Doctrines Protestants Should Know."

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This summer another intensive evangelistic effort was conducted in Western Nigeria and Ghana, where an additional 100,000 Scripture portions were distributed. Ten PTL men using five sound trucks, with many cooperating missionaries and Christian interpreters, blanketed this populous region with the spoken and printed message of salvation. Remember the great PTL African campaigns daily and give as the Lord directs.

Alfred A. Kunz, International Director  
**THE POCKET TESTAMENT LEAGUE**  
49 Honeck Street, Englewood, N. J.

## PROTESTANT PANORAMA

- Evangelical Literature Overseas (sponsors of the second annual World Literature Sunday, October 11) is recruiting a corps of "Big Brothers"—Christian printers willing to lend technical assistance in missionary publication work.
- President Eisenhower is reported to be preparing a Thanksgiving Day proclamation based on Psalm 67.
- Alojzije Cardinal Stepinac will be permitted to resume his duties as Primate of the Roman Catholic church in Yugoslavia after completion of his prison term, according to one of the nation's Communist leaders. The cardinal's term, imposed for alleged wartime collaboration with German and Italian occupying forces, expires in about two years.
- A special Federal court ruled last month that Pennsylvania's law requiring Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's prayer in public schools is unconstitutional. An appeal is pending to the U. S. Supreme Court.
- The National Association of Evangelicals' theme for its 1959 "NAE Week"—October 18-25—is "Standing for the Changeless Word in a Changing World."
- Americans this year are spending almost twice as much on cigarettes as they contribute to their churches, according to a U. S. Department of Agriculture report.
- The Unitarian Universalist Church of the Reconciliation was dropped from the Council of Churches of Utica and Oneida County (New York) last month because the congregation would not acknowledge "Jesus Christ as divine Lord and Savior."
- Simultaneous dinners in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco launched a \$7,500,000 Christian Higher Education Fund campaign last month for the General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches.
- One hundred and fifty-three representatives of major Protestant radio and literature ministries in 23 Latin American countries wound up a six-day "Congress on Evangelical Communications" in Cali, Colombia, last month by forming a new radio-TV organization to be known as DIA (Difusiones Inter-Americanas).
- First portions of a revised version of Martin Luther's translation of the Old Testament will soon be submitted for approval to member churches of the Evangelical Church in Germany.
- A new law in Manitoba empowers the province to "step in quickly" to provide medical care for children, even if parents protest on religious grounds.
- The Anglican Synod of Sydney plans to probe the "increasing emphasis on sex in Australia."
- The Church of England has only 9,691,000 confirmed members 13 years and over out of a total of 26,771,000 persons who have been baptized in the church, according to a Religious News Service report based on a new book of Anglican statistics.
- The Russian Orthodox Church Outside of Russia opened a high school in New York last month, its first secondary institution in America.
- International Child Evangelism Fellowship, Inc., is moving its general headquarters from Pacific Palisades, California, to Grand Rapids, Michigan.
- The United Presbyterian Board of Christian Education came out with a new magazine this month. The publication, called *Hi Way*, is designed for senior high youth.
- The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, with offices in Washington, is asking its seven supporting national conventions to expand its program and double its annual budget.
- Juvenile delinquency set a grim new record in 1958, according to the FBI. Arrest statistics collected from police departments in 1,558 cities with a population of more than 2,500 showed 480,615 arrests involving persons under 21 years of age.

## KHRUSHCHEV

(Cont'd from p. 32) many correspondents interpreted as the worst row of the trip. Factions within the AFL-CIO appeared to be vying for the distinction of which was the more strongly anti-Communist. One group boycotted the meeting with Khrushchev while the other baited him with questions. Afterward, there was dissension even in the group that met with him over what actually was said.

Khrushchev spent Sunday, September 20, on a train travelling up the California coast and here again he failed to see the real America where some 63 per cent of the population belongs to a church. Morning church hours found hundreds of persons, most wearing leisure togs, lining the tracks for a glimpse of the Red leader. The image of families dressed in Sunday best, Bibles under arm, was conspicuously absent.

It was in San Francisco that the Premier attributed a portion of Communist philosophy to the teachings of Christ. His audience took the remark at face value and applauded him enthusiastically.

## THE LAST QUESTION

Of all questions publicly addressed to Khrushchev during his U. S. visit, the very last was the only one which evoked anything even approaching a serious discussion of religion under communism. It was asked by Edward P. Morgan of the American Broadcasting Company at the end of a news conference held in Washington just a few hours before Khrushchev left to return to Moscow.

MORGAN: "Those of us who went to the U.S.S.R. with Vice President Nixon were surprised at the number of young people in church. If there is an increasing interest in religion, what will be your attitude towards churches?"

KHRUSHCHEV: "Well, first of all I believe the question itself confirms the fact that we do have a full freedom of conscience and religion in our country as we have been saying all along.

"Furthermore, I would like to say that this is partly explained, the large number of young people in churches, perhaps is partly explained by the feeling of curiosity. Young people are curious. I was telling the President the other day that immediately after the war when our Marshal Tolbukhi was returning from Bulgaria, I invited him to my home in Kiev. My

Khrushchev, while in San Francisco, visited the Top of the Mark, "probably the world's most famous bar," but he made no attempt to view a church there or elsewhere or to meet any of the nation's religious leaders. Not until he got to Pittsburgh did he hear an invocation (by Dr. Howard C. Scharfe, prominent Presbyterian minister).

Evangelical observers, assessing some of the adverse effects of the Khrushchev visit, expressed the hope that Eisenhower will seek a more objective and realistic view of the citadel of communism when he visits the Soviet Union next spring. Many hope he will press the distinction between religious freedom and religious tolerance. They would like him to take a good look, not only at the Moscow showcase, but at the Siberia so notorious for banishments.

Clergy reaction to Khrushchev's U. N. disarmament proposal was sparse, with most realizing that the plan contained nothing new, that it was merely the restatement of an ideal with no accompanying explanation as to how it could be achieved. There was some speculation

grandchildren were very curious to see how a real marshal looked like. They hid and looked from around the corners to see what he was like, what a live marshal was like.

"Many of our young people hear about religion, about God, about saints, about church ceremonies, and they have a curiosity about this. Even if each one of them goes to church only once, they are so numerous that the doors of our churches would never close.

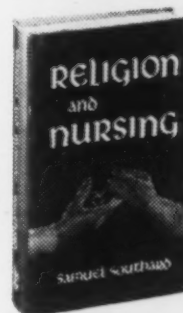
"This feeling of curiosity is very important. For instance, I am sure that many people in this country ran out to see me because they wanted to see a living Communist from the Soviet Union. It is the same way in our country. If a capitalist comes to our country, our people, our young people, want to take a look, to see if he has a tail as an attribute to his person.

"So there is nothing surprising about these things."

Though gesturing dramatically, Khrushchev replied evasively. He cited what presumably he believes is the reason for the religious interest of Russian young people, but he failed to face up to the heart of the question, which inquired of K's attitude toward such interest.

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that the four-year time element might have been geared for a climax to take place during the 1964 U. S. election campaign with the Red hope that, for the sake of an issue, some politicians might be willing to pick up the Soviet line.

It was significant that Khrushchev never sought to spell out particulars of Communist philosophy. There is reason to believe that he may have attributed to Americans a lack of conviction about democracy and the Judeo-Christian tradition and felt he could well afford to evade coming to grips with the basic conflicts they have with communism. He failed to demonstrate how the free world could depend upon an agreement with powers which subordinate international commitments to the interests of their own state. There was nothing to indicate that he has changed his mind since last March, when he was reported to have told Communists at a Leipzig fair:

"You should not take too seriously the treaties made with the imperialists. Lenin, too, signed a peace treaty after World War I that remained valid only so long as it proved necessary."

### Baptist Aide

Among U. S. Air Force personnel who helped Soviet airmen fly Khrushchev's giant four-engine turboprop to Washington and back to Moscow was Captain Harold Renegar, 35, a veteran pilot who is an active member of the Temple Hills Baptist Church in Washington, D. C.

Renegar, who speaks Russian, was converted at the age of nine in the Evans Avenue Baptist Church in Fort Worth, Texas, under the ministry of Dr. Ramsay Pollard, now president of the Southern Baptist Convention.

Renegar studied at Baylor University and while there traveled with a male quartet which sang at special church programs and conventions.

### Swords into Plowshares

*They shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning-hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.*

The passage, found in Isaiah 2 and in Micah 4, is inscribed on a stone wall facing the U. N. building in New York. Khrushchev saw a figurative fulfillment of the prophecy when he visited the John Deere factory near Des Moines, Iowa:

The plant was built early in World War II for manufacture of machine-gun bullets. Today it produces farm implements.

## SCHOLARS' VIEWS

(Cont'd from page 31) Seminary; "The most vital issue facing contemporary Christianity is that of a critique of historical reason. The most pressing question is as to whether and where objectivity may be found in history. The Church must preach Christ and the resurrection. Can it do so unless Christ speaks to us directly in Scripture?"

GUSTAVE WEIGEL, Jesuit theologian and author, Woodstock College: "The pressing task of contemporary Christianity is to communicate the authentically genuine message of Christ and the Church in forms proper to the cultures of our era. The substance of the message is fixed but the modes of expressing it must be those spontaneous to the minds and hearts of our place and day. Older modalities encased in polemics deriving from dead cultural situations must be buried with the situations which caused them."

Acknowledgements: The pictures of Professors Barth, Niebuhr, Stewart, and Tillich are Religious News Service Photos.

### 'Courtesy Call'

Archbishop Egidio Vagnozzi, newly-appointed Vatican "Apostolic Delegate" to the United States, paid a "courtesy

call" on President Eisenhower at the White House last month. Presidential assistant Rocco Siciliano accompanied Archbishop Vagnozzi to the 25-minute conference in Eisenhower's office.

It was the first meeting between the President and Vagnozzi, whose predecessor was elevated to the College of Cardinals earlier this year.

### How Ecumenical?

Greek Orthodox Archbishop Iakovos says that "officially" the Ecumenical Patriarchate in Istanbul "knows nothing" about reported plans for discussions in Italy next year between Roman Catholic and Orthodox representatives.

In a statement released through the World Council of Churches office in Geneva, the archbishop said the Orthodox will "never participate in any conversation with the Roman Catholic church which does not have as its eventual aim the inclusion of Protestants."

The Orthodox prelate, recently elected a WCC president, was commenting on a report broadcast by Vatican Radio last month which said that 10 Roman Catholic representatives and an equal number from Orthodox churches would convene in Venice for "theological discussions of interest to both churches."

## PEOPLE: WORDS AND EVENTS

**Deaths:** The Rev. Arnold H. Grumm, 65, honorary vice president of the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, in St. Louis... Dr. T. W. Hazlewood, minister of St. Paul's-Avenue Road United Church in Toronto and News Correspondent for CHRISTIANITY TODAY... Dr. Charles G. Shatzer, 81, dean emeritus of Wittenberg University and former executive secretary of the Lutheran Laymen Movement, in Springfield, Ohio... Dr. Leigh Colvin, 79, noted prohibition leader... Dr. Charles Fama, physician who for more than 30 years was a lay preacher at the Church of the Gospel, a mission to Italian Roman Catholics associated with the Bedford Park Presbyterian Church in Brooklyn, New York.

**Elections:** As general secretary of the Commission on Ecumenical Mission and Relations of the United Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., the Rev. John Coventry Smith... as president of the Seventh-day Baptist General Conference, the Rev. Victor Skaggs.

**Appointments:** As dean of the school of theology at New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Dr. J. Hardee Kennedy; as dean of the school of religious education, Dr. John M. Price, Jr.; as dean of the school of sacred music, Dr. W. Plunkett Martin; as professor of church history, Dr. William A. Mueller... as president of Bethany Bible College, the Rev. C. C. Burnett... as guest professor of religion at Bethany College, Dr. Donald McGavran... as national chaplain and chairman of religious activities of the U. S. Junior Chamber of Commerce, Cloyd R. Croft, Jr.... as pastor of the Tremont Temple Baptist Church in Boston, the Rev. Carl J. Giers... as editor-in-chief of *Forth Magazine*, official monthly of American Episcopalianism, Henry L. McCorkle... as national executive director of Episcopal women's work, Miss Frances M. Young... as superintendent of *Christian Herald's* Bowery Mission and Young Men's Home, Raymond J. Allen... as president of the newly-formed National Student Christian Federation, Allan Burry.

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# Books in Review

## DISPENSATIONAL THEOLOGY

*The Greatness of the Kingdom*, by Alva J. McClain (Zondervan, 1959, 556 pp., \$6.95), is reviewed by George Eldon Ladd, Professor of Biblical Theology, Fuller Theological Seminary, and author of *The Gospel of the Kingdom*, soon to be published by Eerdmans.

The importance of this book must be measured against the not insignificant movement within evangelical Christianity which insists that a dispensational theology alone is a truly biblical theology and that any deviation is a movement toward liberalism. Alva McClain is president of Grace Theological Seminary and has been teaching theology for 30 years. This volume is the first in a projected series of seven which will treat the entire field of theology. Here is the mature product of one of America's leading dispensationalist theologians setting forth an exhaustive biblical exposition of the kingdom of God which is the most important doctrine for dispensationalism. The book raises the question whether dispensational theology, as represented by this volume, can lay valid claim as legitimate spokesman for evangelical Christianity.

We must first clarify the nature of dispensational theology. The heart of the system is not seven dispensations nor a pretribulation rapture of the Church. It is the notion that God has two peoples, Israel and the Church, and two programs—a theocratic program for Israel and a redemptive program for the Church. Israel is a national people with material blessings and an earthly destiny; the Church is a universal people with spiritual blessings and a heavenly destiny. The oft-used verse, "rightly dividing the Word of truth," means to discern between the Scriptures which apply to Israel and those which apply to the Church. Judaism and Christianity: these are two biblical religions which must not be confounded or confused (L. S. Chafer, *Dispensationalism*, Dallas, 1951, p. 107).

This is the pattern of McClain's theology. The mediatorial kingdom of Christ is a blessing for Israel, not for the Church. "We meet . . . one insuperable obstacle to the view which equates the Messianic kingdom of Christ with his work as a personal Saviour of men. As to the latter, there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; each human soul must be saved in the same way of grace, and there are no national

priorities. But in the established Kingdom on earth the nation of Israel will have the supremacy" (p. 424). Christ did not come to bring a spiritual Kingdom. That which he offered Israel was the earthly Davidic Kingdom. When it was rejected, he disclosed his purpose to bring into existence a new thing—the Church. But the Kingdom was not given to the Church (as the natural exegesis of Matt. 21:43 suggests; see I Pet. 2:9); it was rather deferred until a new generation of Jews ("a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof") accepts the Kingdom at the second advent of Christ. The idea of a present spiritual Kingdom is a "fiction" (p. 440); the Church is heir to salvation, not the Kingdom of God. The "mystery of the Kingdom" (Mark 4:11) is the existence of an interregnum between the arrival of the King and the establishment of the Kingdom (p. 325). The Pharisees, by their obstinate rejection of the King, shut both themselves and their contemporaries out of the Kingdom (Matt. 23:13) by causing its delay (p. 358).

McClain attempts to exegete all references to the Kingdom in Acts and the Epistles in terms of the future earthly Jewish Kingdom. In Acts 3, the Kingdom was officially reoffered to Israel. Throughout Acts, the Kingdom is proclaimed as "an impending possibility, contingent upon the attitude of Israel toward the King" (p. 423). Such apparently clear passages as Colossians 1:13 which says that the saved have already been brought into the kingdom of Christ cannot be taken at face value but must be interpreted "judicially." Believers are now *de jure* in the Kingdom; the reality awaits the establishment of the earthly Kingdom (p. 439 f.).

McClain achieves this structure not from an inductive exegesis of the New Testament but from the Old Testament. The prophets picture an earthly Kingdom with Israel as the favored nation under a Davidic King. This Old Testament concept McClain takes as the basic idea of the Kingdom, and the New Tes-

tament data are interpreted in light of the Old Testament pattern.

This brings us to the fundamental dispensational hermeneutic in contrast with that of classical theology. Classical theology recognizes progressive revelation and insists that the final meaning of the Old Testament is to be discovered as it is reinterpreted by the New Testament. McClain does indeed give lip service to this hermeneutic (p. 261) but he does not practice it. The natural exegesis of Colossians 1:13 places Christians in the present spiritual kingdom of Christ; but McClain's hermeneutic will not tolerate this exegesis because the Kingdom, by definition (derived from the Old Testament) is an earthly kingdom with Israel at its center, and such a kingdom must await the return of Christ. Therefore Colossians 1:13 must have reference to this future Kingdom.

This hermeneutic leading to the definition of the Kingdom as the earthly Davidic Kingdom raises two problems which McClain has failed to solve. The first is the relation of the Church to Israel and to the Davidic Kingdom. He admits that some kind of relationship exists. The Church is already experiencing the spiritual blessings of this future Kingdom—forgiveness, justification, regeneration, the gift of the Holy Spirit (p. 440), and the Church will be the spiritual nucleus of the future Kingdom (pp. 423, 429). McClain fails to explain by what logic the Church can experience the blessings of the Kingdom when the Kingdom itself is future. If the kingdom of God, as Paul says, is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14:17), and if such blessings are the present fruit of the Spirit (Gal. 5:22-23), then in some sense of the word the Kingdom itself must be present. The exegesis by which McClain tries to relegate such verses as Romans 14:17 (p. 434) and Col. 1:13 (p. 439 f.) to the future is unnatural and artificial; and he fails to discuss Luke 16:16 altogether. Furthermore, McClain fails to establish an intelligible relation between the Church and Israel in the future Kingdom. Israel will be the favored nation and will reign over the Gentiles (p. 149 ff.). The Church is to be the spiritual nucleus in the Kingdom (p. 429) and will occupy the place of honor (p. 330). The Church will not only be the spiritual nucleus in the Kingdom; but from its residence in heaven it will rule with Christ over the earth (pp. 496-499) much as a business man commutes to the city from his home in the suburbs (p. 500). How can the



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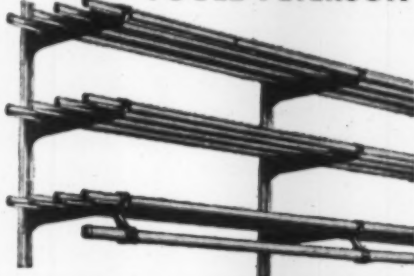
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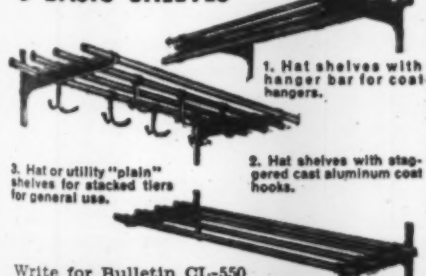
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Church be both the "spiritual nucleus" of the Kingdom and yet rule from heaven over the earth? What is to be the relationship between Israel and the Church, both of whom are to reign over the earth during the Millennium? We look in vain for solutions to these problems.

An even more serious problem is that of the relation of the death of Christ to the Mediatorial Kingdom. Christ did not speak of his death until his offer of the Kingdom to Israel had been firmly rejected, and he disclosed his purpose to bring the Church into existence by his death. McClain places great stress on the fact that Jesus at first proclaimed the gospel of the Kingdom with no word about his death and resurrection (p. 332). The conclusion is unavoidable: in McClain's system, the Cross is relevant to the Church but not to the Kingdom. The proclamation of the gospel of the Kingdom needed no work of the Cross. McClain dismisses the question of what would have happened if the Jews had received their Messiah as speculative and deserving no final answer. "The objector might well be reminded, however, that there was once in Old Testament history a Theocratic Kingdom on earth before Messiah died, and therefore the possibility [of a Kingdom without a cross] need not be rejected on a priori grounds" (p. 333, n. 21).

This theological confusion stems from a basic failure to understand the nature of Christ's mediatorial ministry; and this in turn derives from an unwillingness to accept the New Testament definition of the kingdom of God and to reinterpret the Old Testament in light of the New Testament definition. McClain does indeed recognize verbally the New Testament concept of the Kingdom. "When the last enemy of God has been put down by our Lord, acting as Mediatorial King, the purpose of His Mediatorial Kingdom will have been fulfilled. As the Apostle Paul wrote, 'He must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet' (I Cor. 15:25)" (p. 512). Just so! And Paul adds, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed (*katargeo*) is death" (I Cor. 15:26). The kingdom of God is the reign of God in Christ to "destroy" or "put down" his enemies, the last of which is death. When death, Satan, sin, and all the evil which goes with them have been subdued, God's kingdom will come. Indeed, the coming of the Kingdom means their destruction. The Kingdom is indeed future, awaiting the return of Christ.

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and resurrection of Christ have already begun the "destruction" of these enemies. By his death, Christ has "destroyed" (*katargeo*) him that has the power of death, that is, the devil (Heb. 2:14). Our Saviour, by his appearing, has "abolished" (*katargeo*) death and brought life and immortality to light through the Gospel (II Tim. 1:10). Furthermore, the believer shares spiritually Christ's death "that the body of sin might be destroyed" (Rom. 6:6) (*katargeo*). The "destruction" of Christ's enemies is not a single act but two acts. By death and resurrection, Christ has won an initial victory over his enemies; by his Second Coming, he will finish the conquest of evil. Both are redemptive acts of Christ's mediatorial reign. Therefore the kingdom of God, the redemptive rule of God, is both future and present. It has manifested itself in history, and it will manifest itself again at the end of history. We enjoy its blessings, and yet we look forward to its blessings. Fulfillment and consummation: these are the two stages in the accomplishment of God's Kingdom.

McClain's system leads him to further difficulties. He recognizes that Christ is now enthroned at God's right hand; but "this was not the throne of David transferred somehow from earth to heaven, as some have mistakenly supposed, but God the Father's own Throne in the Universal Kingdom" (p. 34). But if, as McClain admits, the Mediatorial Kingdom means the subduing of such enemies as death, then the present session of Christ at God's right hand by which he has been exalted over the powers of evil is at the heart of his mediatorial work. McClain fails to understand that the mediatorial work of Christ is concerned not only with the subduing of rebellion and evil on earth (p. 35) but with the subduing of rebellion and evil in the spiritual realm (Luke 10:18; John 12:31, 16:11; Eph. 1:20-22; Col. 1:15). Evil has a cosmic dimension of which McClain is not aware.

We must conclude that dispensationalism can be no substitute for classic theology because its false hermeneutic prohibits it from recognizing the true character of the kingdom of God as set forth in the New Testament. Dispensationalism is an Old Testament theology which is unable to fit New Testament theology into its system.

A final observation reflects unfavorably upon our author's work. McClain, like most dispensationalists, has lost contact with the world of theological thought. Dispensationalism has never thrived upon dialogue with other theological points of

view; it flourishes only in the hothouse of its own exclusive system. Most of the literature, exegetical and theological, cited to give support to his interpretation, is about two generations old. Alford, Lange, H. A. W. Meyer, Ellicott, and Godet are his chief New Testament authorities. Almost no modern literature on the kingdom of God is used. Certainly a theology designed to meet the needs of the twentieth century should be relevant to the issues of the hour.

GEORGE ELDON LADD

## BATTLE AGAINST TEMPTATION

*Between God and Satan*, by Helmut Thielicke, translated by C. C. Barber (Eerdmans, 1958, 77 pp., \$2), is reviewed by the Rev. Cecil V. Crabb, Pastor of Rock Island (Tenn.) Presbyterian Church.

This little volume by the professor of systematic theology at the University of Hamburg is a very timely, profound discussion of the temptation of Christ. The author does not give us a mere devotional, homiletical treatment of this great theme but a profound, theological consideration of its meaning to Jesus and to the believer. He discusses each temptation clearly and in many ways in an original manner. In the first temptation he deals with the reality of hunger, the appeal of Satan to basic instinct. As the author well points out, the adversary does not assail Christ with mere speculative doubts in "the shadow art of apologetics" but challenges him in the "realm of concrete things." In the second temptation the author deals with the "alluring miracle of display." The devil takes his stand upon the fact of God, but only upon his own terms; and yet he presents a deity of sheer power and not of holy, personal will. In the third the author discusses Satan's offer of universal dominion upon his own terms in contrast with Jesus' kingdom of the world. Upon the background of "the shining landscape," with "the globe in the devil's hand," the temptation is very alluring, since one passion of the Christ is to win the world to the Father.

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This book will help the reader interpret world conflicts and strengthen him to meet his temptations. CECIL V. CRABB

## ANTHROPOLOGY AND FICTION

*Man in Modern Fiction*, by Edmund Fuller (Random House, 1958, 165 pp., \$3.50), is reviewed by Henry W. Coray, author of *Son of Tears*.

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### Editor's Note

Beginning with this October 12, 1959, issue of CHRISTIANITY TODAY, Volume IV will carry consecutive cumulative page numbering, in addition to individual issue page numbering. This new arrangement should facilitate more satisfactory use of the index for library reference and research and for general purposes.

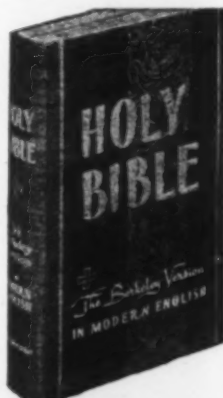
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tion has made a sharp break with the great literary tradition, a break that finds its roots deep in anthropology as well as in theism. What has been the result? We have lost more than we have gained.

Basically, there are three images of man: the concept of man as innately good, God-emergent, progressing toward perfection; man as lost, desperately evil but still redeemable; man as soulless, morally irresponsible, sub-human, a stark animal product of the atheistic segment of the existentialist movement. It is against the exponents of this third doctrine that Fuller releases his angriest blast. He puts the James Joyce, Norman Mailer, James Jones, Philip Wylie, and Jack Kerouac school of writers on the

table, operates with a scalpel honed to razor-edge sharpness, and lets you watch the patients soak in their own malignant juices.

Edmund Fuller is master of the invective. But he does make his point; he turns on light as well as heat. There is, he argues, a terrifying split in the human family. It involves politics, ideas, art, and science. Man is divided against man. But basically it is a religious division, "for it simply is not possible to express a doctrine about the nature of man without a religious implication" (p. 6).

A serious flaw in the book is the misrepresentation of Calvin's view of sin. One could wish that before Mr. Fuller attacked the Reformer, he had revisited the *Institutes*. HENRY W. CORAY

### FOR ALL?

*For Whom Did Christ Die?* by R. B. Kuiper (Eerdmans, 1959, 104 pp., \$2), is reviewed by G. Aiken Taylor, Minister of First Presbyterian Church, Alexandria, Louisiana.

This is a serious theological treatise on the divine design of the Atonement. The author's preoccupation, in traditional and typical Dutch Calvinistic fashion, is with the question: Did Christ die for all or for some?

Existing viewpoints generally fall within three broad categories, according to the author. Unrestricted Universalism, traceable in history as far back as Origen, preaches the ultimate salvation of all men. Its modern exponents include not only professed Universalists but an increasing number of representatives of all major denominations, such as Nels Ferré, C. H. Dodd, J. A. T. Robinson, William P. Paterson and others.

Arminian Universalism or "inconsistent" Universalism is widespread among so-called evangelicals and even fundamentalists. This view holds that the Atonement was universal in its design, but limited in its accomplishment. The Trinity are said to have purposed the salvation of all, yet somehow that purpose is frustrated by men, for plainly not all are saved. Dr. Kuiper adds Karl Barth to the company already mentioned, of "inconsistent" universalists. His view of election makes him "clearly innocent of consistency at this point."

Particularism, identified with historic Calvinism, is the third alternative, of course. The author makes a strong case for the Reformed doctrine of limited Atonement as the Scriptural teaching. He argues that practical experience and the need for consistency as well as the



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overwhelming weight of all the scriptural data combine to support the conclusion that Christ died only for those who are numbered among the elect.

G. AIKEN TAYLOR

**PREACHING THE WORD**

*Favorite Sermons of John A. Broadus*, edited by Vernon Latrelle Stanfield (Harper, 1959, 147 pp., \$2.75), is reviewed by H. C. Brown, Jr., Professor of Preaching, Southwestern Theological Seminary.

The Master, the minister, the message, the members of the congregation, and the mechanics of homiletics (preparation and delivery) are the normative elements in the preaching situation. While it is not desirable or perhaps even possible to arrange these in a complete order of relative importance, one should easily recognize that the minister, next to the Lord, is the most important factor in the experience of preaching.

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Furthermore, Stanfield in his introduction lists four other factors responsible for Broadus' greatness as a preacher: (1) his devotion to God's message, (2) the simplicity of his preaching, (3) his concern for spiritual decision when he preached, (4) and his effective method of preparation and delivery of sermons.

The 24 sermons in this book, complete messages and outlines, ably demonstrate that John A. Broadus not only could write about and teach homiletics, but that he could also prepare appealing sermons. These messages are lucid, attractive, forceful, and relevant. They are worthy to be studied from the standpoint of practical homiletics, as well as for devotional and spiritual values.

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